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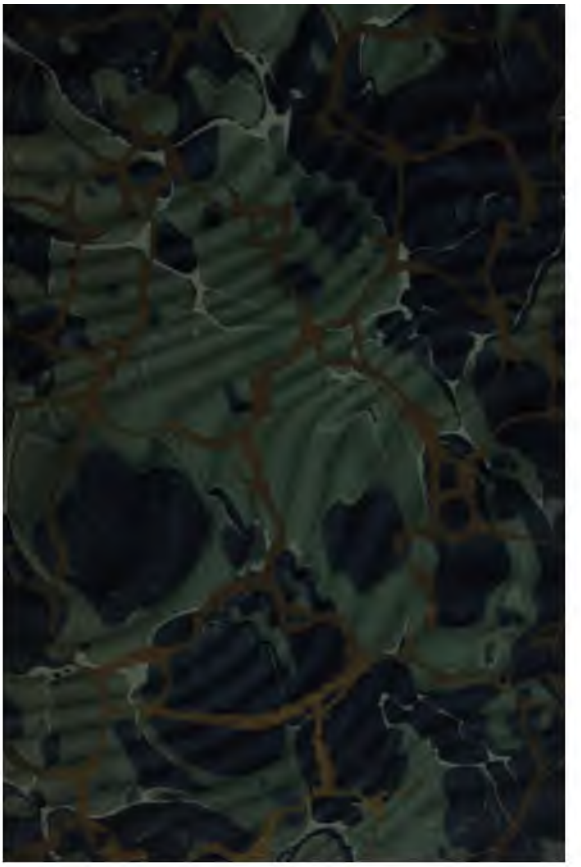

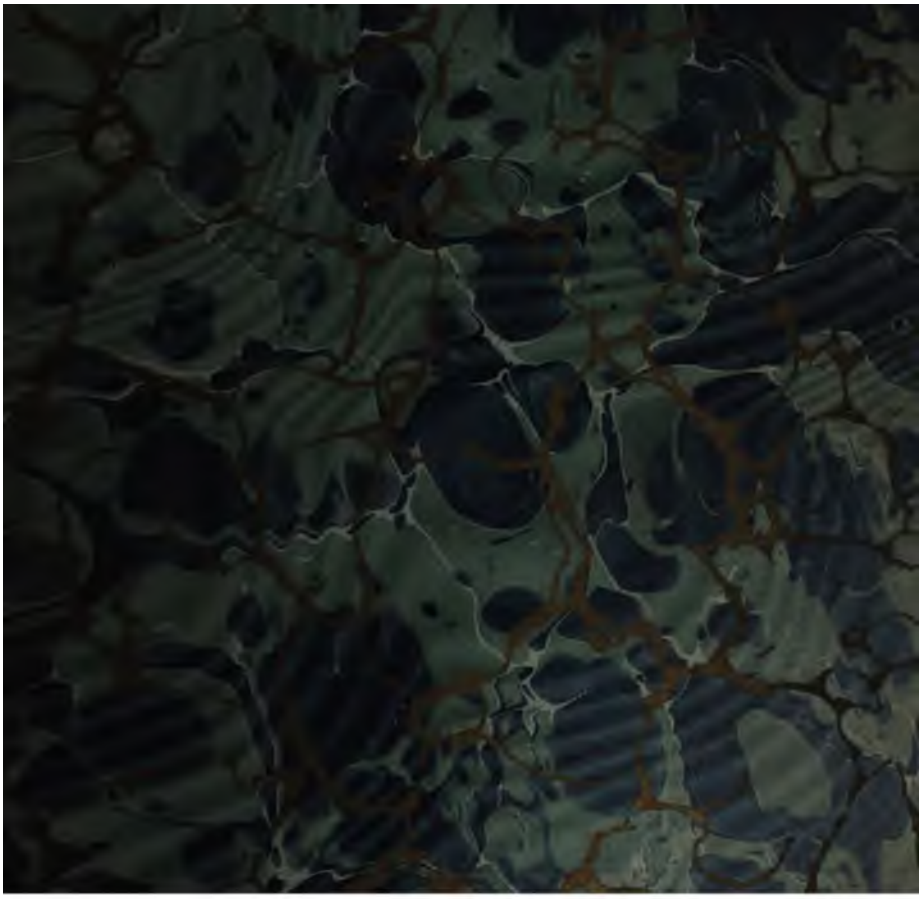

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The Works of

CHARLES PAUL DE KOCK

With a General Introduction by

JULES CLARETIE

THE GOGO FAMILY

Translated into English by

EDITH MARY NORRIS

VOLUME I

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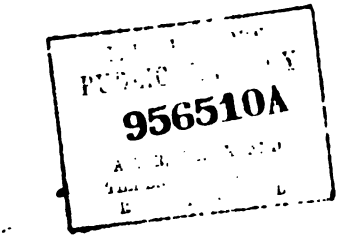

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CHAPTER I

The Forest of Fontainebleau. A Party

Does it chance, dear reader, that you are by any possibility acquainted with the vast forest of Fontainebleau? It is probable that you are, especially if you are a Parisian by birth or residence. French people, and particularly those who dwell in the capital, are not great tourists, as a general thing; perhaps because they think (and it must certainly be conceded that they are right in so thinking) that they will never find elsewhere the allurement, the charm, the multiplicity of pleasures which abound in their own beautiful city, or it may be a matter of temperament, — whatever the reason, Parisians, I repeat, travel very little. In this respect, as in many others, they differ vastly from their English and German cousins, for they do not experience either the desire to go or the need of going about the world, of travelling from country to country to study the habits, manners, and customs of other civilized nations; they do not, like the inquisitive Spaniards, desire to discover new countries, new people; nor are they, like the Russians, used to exiling themselves, to making sojourns of several years at a time in foreign

lands. The fact is, they find their own country beautiful enough, their soil good enough, their women pretty enough, and their cooking excellent enough to content them. That they are right is well evinced by the fact that foreigners visit them much oftener than they visit foreigners.

However, there are two things which the Parisians believe they must see; indeed, not to have seen them indicates a lack of culture. These two things are the sea and the forest of Fontainebleau.

The sea first; it is necessary to give one's self a view of this magnificent spectacle; one must be able in the evening, in a meeting of friends, or with one's neighbors, or in one's back shop, or before one's fire while toasting one's calves, when one has any, one must, I say, be able to talk of the effect produced by the sight of the ocean. It is necessary to have seen the advancing and receding tides; to have walked on the sands and pebbles of its beach, which is very bad for the feet when one is not used to it, and to have gathered there some shells, often very ugly, which are taken home and afterwards shown with pride as one says, "I gathered these myself at the seaside." Then, if one has seen a tempest, has witnessed the awful beauty of the raging waves, one can say still more about it, and, finally, if one has had the advantage of staying for some time by the sea and making a little voyage along its edge in a

boat and has been tossed and caressed by the waves, then one becomes an important personage. Neighbors and acquaintances listen with a respectful air while you describe your seasickness and all that followed. They will regard you as a Cook, a La Peyrouse, a Christopher Columbus; some of them will even decline to eat oysters without consulting you. How admirable that is!

Then it is also necessary to know a forest; a veritable forest, deep, vast, thick, gloomy. It must be a forest in which one may be afraid of losing one's self, if one is not afraid of losing himself he does not know what a forest is, but as the forest of Fontainebleau is incontestably one of the most beautiful which the Parisians have at their gates, it is an object of interest for the inhabitants of the capital. It is the aim of a little journey which everyone wishes to take. Havre and the forest of Fontainebleau; when they have visited both of these places the Parisians think that they have travelled enough, and they ask what could they see more beautiful and more curious than the sea and a forest gloomy with venerable trees, a forest in which there are rocks, real, dark, steep, threatening rocks; rare, wild, clustering, medicinal and poisonous plants; and, lastly, snakes of very respectable dimensions, the bite of which sometimes proves dangerous? You see, the forest of Fontainebleau possesses all the little divertisements that a traveller can desire.

I will not speak of robbers, one finds them everywhere, and in that particular Paris has no occasion to envy foreigners.

But if the journeys to Havre and to Fontainebleau were formerly remote excursions which were taken by those Parisians who wished to pass for tourists, imagine if they realize their desire of seeing those indispensable things, the sea and a forest, now that they have railways, and one can be carried from one place to another in a few hours. Now that one may, after breakfasting at home, near his domestic hearth, in four hours arrive at Rouen, whence, thanks to steam, it is possible to travel as speedily to Havre; and, returning by the same conveyances, find himself at home in Paris in the evening, before the same hearth which he left in the morning. To go to Fontainebleau less time is necessary, although the railway does not yet bring one all the way to the forest.

All this is admirable, is, indeed, almost magical, and the one who had accomplished these journeys in a few hours one or two centuries ago would surely have been regarded as a first-class magician; one would have been denounced, arrested, condemned and burned, as was done to the Marshal d'Ancre, to Gaufridi, curé at Marseilles, to Joan of Arc, and to many others who had the misfortune to be born in advance of the minds and faculties of their contemporaries. He who first understood all that might be done by means

of steam, the unfortunate Fulton, was also recompensed very ill for his discovery. In all cases we see that inventors do not profit by their inventions: "Sic vos, non vobis," Virgil is always right.

Thus no one doubts that you know the forest of Fontainebleau. But have you been there during the month of July, during those long warm days when summer is at its height, in all its glory?

Some prefer the springtime, with the freshness of its verdure, and its sun, whose warmth is still grateful; many others, painters above all, only admire a forest in autumn, because then the foliage is more varied, because yellow and reddish tints mingle with the deep green of the oaks and the dark and gloomy aspect of the pines. Each one to his taste; for myself, I prefer nature in all its fulness. I wish to find in the foliage neither the incompleteness of the springtime nor the decline of the autumn; I love the fresh verdure, the large and handsome leaves, the tufted branches, the moss which does not yet creak under the feet which trample it. And what does the heat of the sun matter to me?—it is never too warm for me in the woods.

Ah, how beautiful, then, are those paths, stretching far out of sight, which they have opened in that superb forest for those visitors who dare not venture into the undergrowth. With what delight the eye rests upon those majestic trees, the

trunks of which are thickly covered with moss. On all sides are branches which form cradles; grass which invites one to be seated thereon; verdurous nooks where one may learn the secrets and mysteries of bird and insect. It is impossible that this picture of teeming nature should not inthrall the imagination.

To the Parisians who come to walk under this thick foliage, the forest offers a thousand charms. One perceives a spot where it would be delightful to read, to meditate, to work; another, desirable and convenient places for eating and drinking; still others say to themselves that one could sleep delightfully there. Each one thinks and sees only that which he feels. It is always so in life; objects are not judged by us as they really are, but, according to our desires, our age, our position, do we see and understand and feel them.

A party of people debouched from a road which led to Moret and took their way towards the route which would bring them to Fontainebleau. This company was composed of five people, two ladies and three men. The ladies were mounted on donkeys, and the men were afoot. An experienced eye would have detected immediately the fact that they were Parisians who were going to visit the forest at Fontainebleau.

One of the ladies, who seemed to be about twenty-seven or twenty-eight, was very well-made. Her figure, though rather unrestrained and devoid

of dignity, was not lacking in charm or grace; and besides, the lady was pretty; she was a pure blonde, or, if you like better to so express it, she was a woman about whose color there was nothing equivocal; for one sees many persons who call themselves blondes whose hair is either red or sandy, or has a puce or yellow shade; and, besides, there are persons with hair of a light chestnut, who are, nevertheless, classed among the blondes; but the person whose portrait we are drawing had beautiful hair, entirely devoid of all these shades which we have mentioned.

Ordinarily, a true blonde has a very white skin, eyes of a clear blue, a rose-leaf tint on her cheek, lightly sketched eyebrows, and her expression and smile are sweet and gentle. Madame Mondigo had all these perfections and more, for her teeth were very beautiful and her rather large mouth allowed them to be frequently seen, so she was really a very pretty woman, which is the reason why one found her rather careless carriage charming; had she been ugly, one would have said that she held herself badly and did not know how to walk.

The other lady was about the same age as the tall blonde, but she was a totally different woman; she was pretty, or rather pleasing. She was a small person, moderately stout, however, but only sufficiently so to show off her waist which, although not positively of those which may be spanned

with two hands (an advantage which the men prize far less highly than the ladies imagine), was yet small enough to set off her figure. In waltzing with this lady a gentleman would not have been afraid of breaking her or seeing her break in halves in his hands; he would not have bemoaned to himself the suffering she must experience in breathing, which often happens to one who is dancing with one of those matrons or maids whose waist is sometimes not so large as that of a doll. In place of admiring their marvellous figures one pities the torture they must endure in their corsets and, as the old song has it,—

Pity is not love.

This lady, then, had not the appearance of being restricted in her corset, and her carriage was improved by it. She was lively, light, unconstrained and active in her movements, as accorded well with the laughing, mischievous expression of her face; her forehead was rather round, her eyes brown, and not very large, her small nose was indeterminate in character, her fresh mouth was always laughing, her hair was of a dark chestnut, and her gay and vivacious manner added a charm to her manifold attractions. Such was Madame Marmodin, who could not keep still for a moment on her donkey, which she was continually striking and pricking and harassing, sometimes putting the poor animal into a bad humor, and when he kicked and gambolled, or tried to lie down in the

road, the little lady mingled shrieks with her bursts of laughter, which had the effect of stunning the donkey and frightening the company.

M. Marmodin, the husband of the smaller dame, was a man of forty-five or thereabouts. He was tall, yellow, and very thin; his face was lean, his nose formed three very pronounced curves, from which it followed naturally that the point of it turned under, giving him very much the appearance of a bird of prey, or, at least, a resemblance to that one of the species which is very common in the neighborhood of Paris. Two round green eyes shaded by thick eyebrows, thin lips, a receding mouth and very projecting cheek bones made M. Marmodin a very plain man; one cannot deny that he was distinguished looking, for he was most uncommonly ugly.

M. Mondigo, the husband of the pretty blonde was one of those men who laugh at nothing. He was thirty-nine years of age and his figure was beginning to grow rotund, which displeased him very greatly. At twenty years of age he had been good-looking enough, and was still so, as far as one could judge of a face covered with beard, whiskers, and mustache, and surrounded with long hair worn in its natural fashion, which resembled a wig of Louis the Fourteenth's time. It was useless to search for features in this countenance, one could see only hair and fluttering curls. Fortunately this fine man with flowing mane was fair, which soft-

ened his capillary aspect, that would otherwise have been too formidable.

The third gentleman, completing this party of five who were on their way to the forest of Fontainebleau, was one of those men who wish to appear neither old nor young, which signifies that they are rather old than young. This individual was short in stature, and his sheeplike face would have been pleasing had both his eyes looked the same way, but this never happened; when one looked to the right the other was obstinately fixed to the left, and when one of them looked up to heaven the other appeared to be searching for something on the ground; in fact, M. Roquet squinted in the frankest manner possible. In the vain endeavor to hide this defect, the gentleman continually wore spectacles, but under the glasses his eyes played the same tricks. All this did not prevent M. Roquet from being very well pleased with his personal appearance, and believing himself capable of inspiring love; in his slow and mellifluous speech, and the manner in which he listened to his carefully chosen phrases, it was easy to recognize a good deal of pretension and a vivid desire to impress people favorably. His dress was always careful; he affected to follow the newest and even the most exaggerated fashions, in order, perhaps, to win an attention which otherwise he might have missed; but the modern cut of his clothing, his well-varnished boots, and his

irreproachable gloves did not prevent Monsieur Roquet from having a clumsy, stiff, and awkward manner, so much so that he was frequently laughed at in society for his visual infirmity, and for his affectations and pretension.

Let us walk now with our party, in order that we may become better acquainted with the five persons who compose it.

A shriek was heard; M. Roquet, who was a little in front, started in affright, then he returned to the others, muttering, —

"What is the matter there, I wonder?"

The shouts of laughter which followed the shriek informed him that he had no cause for fear. The fact was that Madame Marmodin's donkey had evinced a strong predilection for lying down, and the little woman, following her custom, had begun by being frightened and had ended by laughing.

"Mon Dieu, Francine, how annoying you are with your shrieks," said the gentleman who resembled a bird of prey, approaching his wife. "I thought you were braver than that. You often ask me to let you ride on horseback, and you don't know how to keep your seat on a donkey."

"I don't know how to keep my seat! it's all very well to say that! I wish you could find yourself in my place, monsieur, on this stubborn beast which won't obey me — which kicks — which stops when I want to go on — turns to the right

when I wish to go to the left. Here, look at him now! What is he looking for on the ground? Wouldn't anybody think he was trying to pick up a pin with his teeth. Yes, I repeat, a horse is much easier to manage."

"See Madame Mondigo, how well she manages hers, how docile he is with her."

"Certainly," said the gentleman with the long hair, "my wife looks like a horsewoman on her donkey."

"Francine — she's lolling, she's sitting as if she were in an easy chair. You are comfortable on your donkey, Clémence, aren't you?"

The blond lady half turned, and answered, smiling, —

"Why, yes, it isn't bad, this animal is very gentle, he behaves like a good fellow."

"Oh, Madame Mondigo is very fortunate," answered the little woman, in a mocking tone. "It seems as though the beast were made expressly for her. Just like the other day, when we were going to Montmorency, my horse flagged twice, and hers did not even stumble. It's true she only goes at a foot pace and I go fast. Come, little donkey, come, my friend, be a little more lively. Here's a pretty bit of road for trotting or galloping, oh, you had better be a little more nimble or I shall try if a prick from a pin won't make you go. There, he's taking me into the thicket now."

"Beautiful forest! superb forest!" said M. Mondigo, looking around him. "If I lived at Fontainebleau, I should often work here."

"Ah, you authors, you men of letters, can work anywhere," said M. Marmodin, "with a few sheets of paper and a pocket inkstand you can settle yourself where you please — the grass, the moss, the bank of a stream becomes your study — it is very convenient for you. I, who occupy myself with scientific works, often need to consult a stack of volumes, and as I cannot carry my library with me I can only work in my closet."

The gentleman with the long mane, who had smiled equivocally when M. Marmodin said he was occupied with scientific works, answered with an air of self-content,—

"Yes, I wrote two dramas at St. Cloud, on the grass in the park. We had then rented a little temporary lodging at Bellevue."

"How do you place yourself to write on the ground?" asked M. Roquet, approaching the man of letters, "It seems to me it would be very difficult."

"Why, no; I lie down at full length on my stomach, I support myself on my elbows, with my paper under my eyes, and I assure you it is a very comfortable way to compose and write."

"Well, now, on your stomach! how very droll! and you have written several plays lying like that? Does that inspire you?"

"I don't say that the position inspires me exactly; but I do tell you that I find it a very convenient way to write in the country."

"The devil! and you don't spread anything on the grass to seat yourself on?"

"No, indeed!"

M. Marmodin blew his nose, took a pinch of snuff, and said, with the manner of a professor teaching his class,—

"The Romans had not, I believe, the habit of extending themselves on their stomachs to write, although they assumed an almost couchant position in taking their repasts, but if they had done so, I think they would have spread upon the ground their pallium, a long mantle resembling those of the Greeks, and particularly of the philosophers; the palliolum, very much smaller, resembled the article which our ladies now designate a 'crispin'. The Romans wore the palla, a short mantle borrowed from the Gauls; and, lastly, they had also the tarentina which came —"

"O mercy, monsieur! do not go any further," said Madame Marmodin, trying to pull up her donkey; "if you once get with your Romans you'll never leave them; — I know you! But we have said that we wished to amuse ourselves and your science dismays me; it is much too serious for me!"

"However, Francine, I was speaking of the costumes worn by the Romans, and I should have

thought that anything that touched on the toilet was interesting to the ladies."

"The modern toilet, the new fashions of today, but what does it matter to me whether your Romans wore long or short mantles. How ridiculous of M. Frederic not to come and meet us here, as he promised; but he's perhaps looking for us in another part of the forest, while we are waiting here."

Madame Mondigo, who had halted her donkey, said in her turn,—

"That is true, Frederic promised to be at Fontainebleau this morning, very early. He was to have come with M. Dernesty; that was understood."

"Hang it, madame," resumed the man of letters, "if you believe what these gentlemen say, you are very credulous. In the first place, my nephew has so many pleasure parties in view that he never knows up to the evening what he will do the next day. Frederic is the most heedless fellow in the world; he will promise you anything, but the next moment ask him what he said to you and he will be embarrassed to tell you."

"If he's like that in everything," exclaimed Madame Marmodin, "that's not very reassuring to the women who receive his vows of fidelity."

The gentleman with the hooked nose made a very pronounced grimace on hearing his wife's reflection. The man of letters continued,—

...ge, how you do
young men!" resumed the litt
"Come, stubborn animal, be qu
now because I wish him to sta
will you change donkeys with
The beautiful blonde turne
the little woman, and casting
which included everybody, ans
"Oh, it's not worth the trou
be as well to remain as we are."
"Remain as you are, then,
Francine, heaving a serio-comic
"Ladies," resumed M. Mo
you I had no intention of blami
my nephew and his friend. By
amuse themselves, according to
the same at all ages, and I think
that one ceases to follow pleasu
dom than for health's sake.
ladies, here are some magnificent
thence that Paris obtained a grea
ing stones; I have been told th
furnished in past years eight h
of them."

ear. "Here, M. Roquet, what do you think of my proposition?—are you inclined to scale these heights?"

M. Roquet looked, or rather squinted, at Madame Marmodin and the rocks at the same time, as he answered,—

"This morning in going to Moret we climbed a good many things, I don't see the necessity of tiring ourselves again; and, besides, it will delay us, and we wish to dine at Fontainebleau before getting into the apologies for omnibuses which convey one to Corbeil."

"Oh, is that it? you are thinking about your dinner. What gourmands men are, they think of nothing but eating and drinking!"

"When I am near you, beautiful lady, I assure you my thoughts are very different."

M. Roquet said this in a whisper, so as not to be heard by M. Marmodin, who was known to be extremely jealous.

The little woman pretended not to hear what M. Roquet said, and she resumed,—

"Oh, if M. Frederic were only with us I am sure he'd already be at the summit of the rocks; I should have said to him, 'I wish for one of those little yellowish flowers that I see up there on those bushes,' and he would have hastened to get them for me, but you gentlemen are not at all gallant."

"My dearest," said M. Marmodin, "in order

to climb up there it would be necessary to have boots made for the purpose — the Romans had special boots which distinguished their rank, their occupation, their position in their world; we French people have only boots and shoes; we do not use the caliga, the crepida, the gallica, the baxea; we put on the calceus and sometimes the soccus, but —"

"Oh, enough, monsieur; that's enough, I beseech you. I shall not scale these heights just now, but that's no reason why we should have to swallow your Romans for an hour. Well, it's all the same; it would have been very nice to make my donkey climb all that."

The little woman tried to guide her donkey near that of the pretty blonde, and resumed talking in such a way as to be heard only by the latter.

"Tell me now, Clémence, is this what you call a party of pleasure? to follow only the straight paths for fear of losing ourselves? — to stop only when it pleases these gentlemen? — to neither run, nor jump, nor have any fun? It seems to me that one comes to the country for something other than that. Our husbands have astonishing ideas; because it suits them to travel gravely along, we must do the same and find it amusing. O what despots men are! If monsieur your nephew and his friend had come with us, as they promised, we should have been a little gayer. Are you not of my opinion?"

"Undoubtedly. It's my husband's fault. He didn't say to his nephew until yesterday that we were going by rail to Corbeil, and from there to Fontainebleau."

"Well, that is clever, I must admit! to say nothing to people till the very day you are going to make an excursion."

"Frederic said to him, 'I cannot accompany you now, but tomorrow morning early I will start with Dernesty. If you are in the forest, only tell us where to leave the train, and we will join you.'"

"When a party is formed, and the members of it do not all start together, the missing ones never join their friends. These gentlemen haven't come perhaps, and we have only M. Roquet to amuse us, — the most tiresome man in Paris, who sighs whenever he is near me, squinting horribly meanwhile."

"Perhaps he is sighing for your donkey."

"Oh, if I was sure that was it I should let him mount very quickly, for then I should have the pleasure of seeing him fall off."

"How mischievous you are!"

"How stupid that man is! and then he looks at you two ways at once, it's indecent. Oh, if our young men had only come, I assure you I should have run and laughed with them without listening to my husband."

"M. Marmodin is very jealous, though, they say," remarked Clémence.

"That doesn't matter to me; on the contrary, it is one more reason for my teasing him. It is extremely fortunate for you that M. Mondigo is not jealous."

"Oh, he doesn't dream of being so; but then I have never given him the least cause."

"Truly? I find your reflection delightful. You think, then, that I conduct myself in such a fashion as to render my husband jealous?"

"Mon Dieu, I had no intention of saying that. Only as you are so very much given to laughing and joking — sometimes there are persons who might think that you were pleased when you — when anyone pays court to you."

"Those persons would be right; I like to be courted very much. I should like all the men to make love to me. Oh, that would be infinitely amusing, all the more so that it would make the other women angry. Come, little donkey, lift up your head; are you looking for some simples? My poor donkey, you needn't snuff so low to find them."

"This forest is immense," said M. Roquet, looking around him with a bewildered air; "do you know that one might lose himself here."

"One is at perfect liberty to do so," exclaimed Madame Marmodin, laughing.

"This was originally the forest of Bière," said the hook-nosed gentleman; "it is nearly thirty-three thousand acres in extent. The Romans

when visiting the sacred forests put on their heads—"

"Oh, my dear, you promised me, over and over again, that you would excuse me from hearing about the Romans during this party to the country. Try to be amiable just for once! Do you know what this forest makes me think of, gentlemen?—of Robin of the Wood; oh, it seems to me that this is just the place for him to show himself."

"What, the great hunter?" said M. Roquet, smiling, but with a sad enough air, and throwing cross looks into the depths of the forest. "Oh, what an idea. This road seems to me rather long, I am afraid we must be mistaken as to the way. We shall not have time for dinner."

"Madame Marmodin, do you not wish to see the great huntsman?" said M. Mondigo, drawing nearer to the little lady. "Ah, you think I am joking, but not so very long ago, the inhabitants of Fontainebleau believed in the chase of the great huntsman, so called,—a great black phantom. When he was hunting in the forest he made a frightful noise there; they heard it often, but they could never see anything. For the rest, do you wish that I should tell you what our old historian, Pierre Mathieu, said about it?"

"Oh, yes, tell us," answered Francine, holding her donkey; "the stories that frighten one are so amusing. In a forest one is so easily frightened."

M. Roquet looked somewhat disturbed and murmured between his teeth, —

"In place of telling ridiculous stories we should find out in what direction we ought to go, for it won't be at all amusing to go farther away from our dinner instead of getting nearer to it."

The literary man rested one of his hands on the crupper of the restive donkey and began the story.

"You should know then, beautiful lady, that King Henry the Fourth, hunting one day in the forest of Fontainebleau, heard the sound of the horn, the shouts of the hunters, the yelping of the dogs; this noise, which at first was far off, soon drew nearer, and became very distinct. The king, desiring to know the cause, begged the Count de Soissons, who accompanied him, to go and see what it was. The latter searched for some time in the forest, and seeing nothing was returning to the king, when a big black man showed himself suddenly in the thickness of the bushes, and cried to him, 'Did you hear me?' and disappeared. The count was seized with fright, and fled, and the shepherds of the neighborhood did not fail to say that it was King Hubert's or King Arthur's hunt passing through the forest."

"Oh, that's very amusing, your story frightens one. Come, little donkey, get on. Oh, I shall have to punch you well, for it seems to me the great black man is pursuing me."

Madame Marmodin set herself to pricking her donkey, and this time she did it so vigorously that her mount decided to take to a gallop and bore off his rider, who at first uttered joyful exclamations; but soon, finding herself carried off so quickly and being unable to stop her animal, she began to be afraid of falling, and holding by one hand to the donkey's mane, and to his tail with the other, she called for help to the persons she had left behind her.

Madame Mondigo also urged her steed, that she might rejoin her friend. The two husbands ran in order to catch up to their wives; and M. Roquet, who had wandered a little from the party, on returning perceived nobody at the end of the path, which led into a kind of crossways where several ways met.

CHAPTER II

An Accident. A Meeting

"What, I am quite alone? these people, after inviting me to accompany them on this little pleasure excursion, have abandoned me in the forest!" said M. Roquet, walking rapidly on, and looking several ways at once, an advantage which he possessed over most people and which he prized very highly at this moment. "I have looked for them well and I do not see them. Hello, there, you others! Mondigo! Marmodin! Where in the world have you got to? If this is intended for a joke I must say it is extremely ill-timed, by Jove, and something I am not at all inclined to put up with even from the best of friends.

"It is not that I am at all alarmed at finding myself alone in the forest, it is not dark, and I shall, doubtless, meet somebody who will show me the right way, but, after all, it's very stupid. When people go together they should keep together; I think I see them getting me to go into the country with them again! Hello! Mondigo! Marmodin!

"They're not so very amusing either; one

of them thinks he is a man of letters, a celebrated author, because he has written some plays which pass in a crowd, — do I say a crowd? there's never anybody there when they play them. The other thinks he's a learned man because he has been to Rome, he speaks of the Romans at every turn. Poor Marmodin, in place of occupying himself with the doings of those proud republicans, it would be better for him to try and look after his wife a little more, she's very gay, very coquettish, the little woman.

"Mon Dieu! it's really very stupid to have lost my way like the 'Petit-Poucet.' Here are several paths before me, which shall I take? Hello, there, you others! Well, now I'm hoarse with calling so much. What if night should surprise me here? Let me see what time it is. Not yet two o'clock, and in the month of July the days are long, which happily leaves me plenty of time. I'm very tired, I'm very hungry! what an infernal pleasure party! I dare not sit down, for there are snakes about here and I have a horror of them; this will teach me to come exploring forests. I know the wood at Romainville, and that was quite enough; one tree is as good as another. I would give twenty francs, with a good heart, to be now at Vefour's in the Palais-Royal."

M. Roquet paused, he was in a great perspiration; he again looked about him on every side, but he saw nobody, nothing but the forest which

seemed gloomier, thicker; it acquired in his eyes an ominous appearance which caused his heart to constrict, and his features to assume a sad expression. He went up to a very high tree, surrounded it with his arms and tried to climb it, because he thought that from a tree-top he could see Fontainebleau, and could then go on with a certainty of not losing himself; but as M. Roquet had never taken gymnastic exercises, and had passed his youth in a peaceable manner, deprived of all manly diversions, he could not raise himself more than a foot from the earth, and the only result of his unfortunate efforts was that he tore his trousers.

"Oh, by the powers! I've done something now," cried M. Roquet, examining that garment, "I've torn them. What the devil do trees and forests amount to? It's not as if I could go and put on another pair, and even at Fontainebleau I have no others; I didn't bring my wardrobe with me. I can't appear before the ladies in this state, they would be scandalized, their husbands would pull long faces. But, after all, I'm not going to worry about it; it is their fault if I have torn my trousers, they should not have left me here. It is very inconvenient though, a brand new pair, it's only the second time I've had them on; but that villain of a tailor has a passion for making my trousers too narrow; I've told him often enough that when I sit down they squeeze me, they bind me, and he answers, 'That will

remedy itself, it's on the crosswise of the cloth, that will stretch, it is elastic.' It is astonishing how it has stretched. At Fontainebleau I shall try to get them sewed up; I have no desire to put pins in them. Come, I must start off again; I shall not be at all constrained in walking now."

M. Roquet walked, with long strides and with a kind of fury, down a lane which stretched in front of him, alternately looking at the path and at his trousers; but suddenly he stopped. About a hundred feet before him he saw something move in the thicket very near the road which he was following. He could not distinguish what it was, but it was about two feet high, brown in color, and rather wide in its dimensions. M. Roquet felt a cold sweat break out on his forehead, he remained motionless and trembling, daring neither to advance nor retreat. The sight of it made him uneasy, and he said to himself,—

"What is that down there? Is it a robber watching me? Is it an enormous snake? I dare not watch it any longer, but I am very much afraid it may be a snake; I believe I should prefer a thief. What shall I do? Oh, what a frightful thing travelling is."

M. Roquet long remained in a state of indecision, his eyes downcast, not daring even to take flight, fearing his legs would fail him. At last, in a moment of despair he decided to hazard another look towards the object which had fright-

ened him. Picture, if you can, his surprise, his delight. This brown object, which he had only seen through the bushes, was the back of a young girl who had been bent over the earth picking flowers, but she had raised herself and regained the path, and in place of a snake Roquet saw the most charming figure that the imagination can create. This was a young girl, hardly seventeen years of age, whose dress was neither that of a peasant nor that of a town-bred girl. It was a delightful face, round, and brilliantly fresh and beautiful; soft, velvety brown eyes, a small, well-formed mouth; and in the features there was a mingled expression of modesty and delicacy, distinction and sweetness. She recalled to one those charming heads with which painters delight to embellish their pictures, and which one always regrets are seldom to be found as perfect in life as on the canvas.

She was dressed in a simple gown of brown linen, a colored kerchief adorned her neck, a black silk apron was tied about her waist, and her beautiful black hair was confined in a little cap which was not so heavy as those of the peasants and which framed admirably her round and rosy cheeks. M. Roquet felt a pleasure which soon changed to satisfaction, for he had always been fond of the fair sex. He advanced towards the young girl and made her a low bow, which he accompanied with an infinitude of little grimaces which he tried

to render very agreeable. Then he stopped before her, and addressed her thus,—

"My faith, mademoiselle, I did not expect anything so pleasant as this meeting. I saw something in the bushes and I said to myself, 'What can it be?' but I thought of everything else except a young girl. It is true, I did not see your face at first."

The young girl smiled and answered in a modest tone,—

"I was picking a bouquet; there are violets, lilies of the valley, and hyacinths about here."

"There are all those here? I had not noticed them. It's true I was trying to find my way, which, perhaps, prevented me from seeing the violets. It would be very nice to pick flowers with you, mademoiselle, for then — for then —"

"You are trying to find your way, monsieur? and where do you wish to go?"

"To Fontainebleau, mademoiselle. I tried to find the east, but that is difficult when one does not know the country, and then I came to a place where at least six paths issued; I ask you, which one should I take? It's very embarrassing."

"No, monsieur, for at each path there is a guide-post on which is the notice, 'To Moret,' or 'To Fontainebleau,' or 'To Avon'—those would tell you which path to take."

"What, are there guide-posts? I did not see them, I must have been a post myself. But I do

not repent it, since it has procured me this happiness — this happiness — "

"Monsieur, if you wish to go to Fontainebleau you must take that path down there to the left, then the first road to the left again, and you will be at the town within half an hour."

"I'm infinitely obliged to you. Oh, I was not very anxious; I said to myself that I should arrive somewhere; but I was with a party, two ladies and two gentlemen mounted on donkeys — not the gentlemen, the ladies — who would not go on — not the ladies, the donkeys — and I have lost them, I don't know how."

"I met them, monsieur, two pretty ladies on donkeys; there was one who laughed a good deal, and two gentlemen, a little older, walking behind."

"Those are they, those are the husbands. You thought them very ugly, didn't you? One has a good deal of resemblance to an owl, and the other, with a long mane, looks like a lion."

"I didn't notice all that, monsieur, but I saw this party in the road that I have pointed out to you; they must be very near Fontainebleau now, and if you wish to rejoin them I should advise you to run."

"No, indeed, they may wait for me. I have no desire to put myself into a perspiration again. And do you live in Fontainebleau, my pretty child?"

"No, monsieur, I am from the village of Avon, where my father is a farmer; but when I was little they sent me to school at Fontainebleau."

"Ah, you have been to school, that speaks favorably for your education. And so you walk alone in the forest of Fontainebleau, and you're not afraid of being stolen? Ha, ha, ha!"

M. Roquet, who had recovered his cheerfulness since he had learned his way and was near a pretty girl, then tried to take her hand, but she quickly drew back, and answered, —

"No, monsieur, I fear nothing, besides, I have never before been in the forest; then I am strong, and if anyone should try to insult me — Oh, I know how to defend myself."

"Certainly, mademoiselle, I should not have said that; but when one is as pretty as you —"

"Good day, monsieur."

"What, are you going so quickly?"

"I have shown you your way, monsieur. The first path to the left, then to the left again, and you will see the town before you."

"Thank you, mademoiselle. Are you going so quickly, mademoiselle? I esteem myself very fortunate in making your acquaintance — mademoiselle! There are many things I should have liked to tell you; I should like to have gone to your village before — bah! she's not listening to me — she's already gone. Well, I must walk on,

and if Madame Marmodin sees that I have torn my trousers she will mock at me; well, so much the worse; besides I shall be careful to hold my hand so that she won't see that I've torn them. That young girl is ravishing, and if I hadn't been so hungry I believe that I should have followed her; she gave me altogether another idea of the country; the forest seems to me much gayer."

M. Roquet still cast glances at the path which the pretty brunette had taken, but presently, fearing that they would begin their meal without him, he decided to double his pace on the road which she had pointed out to him, and in due time arrived at Fontainebleau.

CHAPTER III

The Painter's Son

Let us leave M. Roquet to bemoan his misadventures and run after his missing party, that we may perform a more pleasing task and rejoin Rose-Marie, for that was the name of the charmingly pretty girl whom we have just met in the forest.

After her hasty withdrawal from the vicinity of the squinting gentleman with the torn garments and the spectacles, whose compliments were somewhat familiar and whose manners had, in truth, begun to appear somewhat unconventional and sufficiently embarrassing to the young girl, Rose-Marie, who seemed to be perfectly well acquainted with every turn in this dense forest, had taken a little path hardly traceable in the thickness of the undergrowth, but in which she walked without hesitation, without ever looking before her, like a person who was accustomed to walk there and so was sure of her way. After five minutes walking, often interrupted that she might stop and pick some flowers to enlarge the bouquet which she held in one of her hands, the young girl passed from the undergrowth into a large

clearing. Before her were some very dark, austere-looking rocks, great blocks of sandstone heaped up by chance, and of which a part had evidently been disturbed by the quarrying of paving stones; and at one side some magnificent beeches, which seemed as though they wished to attain to the skies, while some steps farther on others, which had been struck by lightning, were lying on the ground. This neighborhood of the forest had a wild and majestic appearance which would inspire respect and a sort of terror in persons who were not used to visiting it.

But Rose-Marie walked on lightly; glancing around the space she quickly perceived a young man in an artist's blouse, with hair floating in the wind, seated at the foot of an old oak, and having before him a square of canvas on an easel and a box of colors at his side. The young man was painting, or rather making some studies, as the painters say. At this moment he was tracing upon the canvas the picturesque appearance of the rocks before him and, absorbed in his work, he had not observed the young girl, who was standing behind him and looking at his picture without moving, almost without breathing, that he might not suspect that she was there.

Suddenly her admiration carried her away.

"Oh, how good that is!" cried Rose-Marie.

The painter immediately turned, and glancing tenderly at the young girl, exclaimed, —

"How did you come here? And I didn't know it! That was very wrong of you."

"Why, what harm could I do behind you?"

"You deprive me of the happiness of seeing you, of enjoying your presence, and that happiness is so short, it passes so quickly, that I grudge a moment of it."

Rose-Marie lowered her eyes, and murmured,—

"M. Leopold, you always seem to forget our agreement and your promises to me. Perhaps I do wrong in coming every day to the forest to see you paint, for, after all, I have only known you for three weeks, and I met you by chance here. You were painting, as you are now, and I drew near that I might see what you were doing, for I am a little curious; but you said to me that it never troubled you for anyone to watch you working, and I found it so pretty, so well done, and you had the kindness to tell me that you were coming to paint here for some time, and if it amused me I could come and watch you working so long as it gave me pleasure, and I came again and again. Oh, that is a marvellous talent which reproduces the works of nature on canvas."

"Yes, charming Rose, it was thus that we made acquaintance, and I bless the chance which led you this way while I was working here. There is nothing wrong, it seems to me, in all this; and I don't see what you can have with which to reproach yourself."

"Oh, forgive me, because I should always have kept behind you as I am now, but one day you begged me to place myself on the other side of your little canvas. At first I thought that the sun troubled you, and you wished me to shade your easel. I seated myself on the trunk of a tree and did not stir, but then you took another canvas, and, when I wanted to look at what you were doing, you quickly hid it; then the next day you again begged me to seat myself before you, I consented to do so, although the sun was not shining, on the condition that you should show me what you were doing on the other canvas."

"Well, I have shown it to you, Rose."

"Yes, and I am quite satisfied. It was me, that is to say, it was my portrait, seated there on the trunk of a tree, in this simple dress; and it looks so much like me — no, I mustn't say that, I am not so pretty as you made me."

"You are a hundred times prettier, sweet Rose, for no painter could ever render the sensitive and gracious feeling which animates your face at each moment. I can give you a smile, a look, but I cannot put there all the charming shades which pass so rapidly over your mobile features, which animate your eyes, at once so gentle and laughing, and which make me unable to see you without —"

"Ah, M. Leopold, you are again forgetting the promises you made. When you said such

things as these to me once before — things to which a wise young girl should not listen — I wished to go away from here, and I would never have returned if you had not firmly promised, sworn even, — yes, I believe you swore — that you would never speak on such subjects again; but from time to time you begin to do so, and I still continue to come. You see very well that I am right in reproaching you, and my father, who is so good, who has so much confidence in me, what would he say if he knew that I had allowed a gentleman whom I hardly know to paint my portrait?"

The young painter laid his paint brush and his palette on the grass, then, turning towards Rose-Marie, he answered in a serious and almost solemn tone, —

"I have told you my name, and you know what my profession is, most charming girl; I wish that I could make you believe that I shall never seek to deceive you in any manner. I am going to describe my family to you in a few words, for I do not wish to be a stranger, an unknown person to you. My name is Leopold Bercourt; my father was a genre painter, and was possessed of sufficient talent to procure him the means of living at his ease; he married while very young a woman who adored him, but who did not bring him any fortune. He belonged, however, to that small number of people who believe that love

and good conduct are all that is necessary for happiness, and this was the tone of his household. My mother loved him very much; she had the same tastes, the same sentiments as he; it seemed as though a single mind, a single heart, animated those two people, for it often happened that they both expressed at an identical moment, the same thought, the same desire, the same reflection. For twenty years they never parted for a single day. O mademoiselle, is there any more beautiful thing than a happy household? It is the truest happiness that is given to man to taste here below, and if there are so many people who ridicule marriage, or who affect to believe that it brings nothing but weariness and regret, it is because, like the fox of the fable, they have never been able to appreciate, to know, or to deserve this felicity which they find it so easy to deny."

Rose-Marie who had been seated on the grass, listening to the young artist, drew nearer to him then, and exclaimed, —

"You speak just like my father, for he also has been very happy in his home, only he has not been so now for a very long time. Go on, M. Leopold."

"A son and a daughter came to increase the happiness of my parents, for they loved each other too much not to desire pledges of their love; besides, what kind of people are they who do not love children? Coquettes and egotists. My father

and mother were neither the one nor the other. I was born eight years before my sister; when I was twenty-one years old my sister was thirteen, that was two years ago, and we were then perfectly happy. My mother, lively, gay, amiable, always seemed young, she was a sweetheart to her husband, a sister to her children. Although sensitive and impressionable, she had the talent, by a witty word or a piquant expression, to enliven and amuse any society in which she found herself. My sister, being small and delicate, was brought up under my mother's eyes, the latter being also of the number of those who do not understand how anyone can leave to strangers the task of forming the mind and character of their daughter; as though nature did not make a mother the best instructress. Perhaps it may be true that a young girl brought up in this way loses something in regard to certain kinds of knowledge, but surely she gains other qualities. Then, if one cares to take the trouble to notice those young ladies who have become married women, what remains of the knowledge which they acquired with so much trouble at their boarding-schools? To some of them five or six words of Italian or of English, which they pronounce very badly, and with which I defy them to make themselves understood abroad. With others, some ideas of geography, of ancient and modern history which they are in the habit of mingling together and quoting out of

season, and perhaps the talent to draw a profile, a head — a study which they entirely neglect after they enter society. I ask you again, if all this compensates a mother for the loss of her daughter's kisses and caresses? Ah, forgive me, Mademoiselle Rose, I let myself talk too much; I am a gossip, am I not?"

"Do go on, M. Leopold, I should never weary of listening to you when you talk about those things."

"I also wished to be a painter; I studied under a famous master, I went to the Academy, and in order that I might be freer to work and to go in and out without disturbing my parents, perhaps, also, that I might enjoy that liberty which young men are so anxious to know, and of which they make an idol, I rented a little apartment for myself; but I went nearly every day to dine with my parents, who, for the rest, thought it natural enough that at twenty years of age, with the tastes of an artist, I should wish to be my own master. Excuse me for dwelling on these intimate details of this epoch of my life, it is because that was the most beautiful time to me, and I thought that nothing could disturb my happiness and that domestic felicity which I always found at my father's house. I did not know that it is when one is happiest that one should tremble and fear the strokes of fate; but no man thinks of that, and Providence has ordered that it should be so, for

if it were given to us to divine the future we should never enjoy the present.

" My parents loved the country. The pure air of the fields was good for my mother, who, without being an invalid often experienced an oppression, a suffocation, which, however, did not cause much uneasiness in regard to a woman who was thin, active, and endowed with vivacity which approached petulance; besides, my mother very quickly forgot any indisposition, any suffering which might for the moment have alarmed her. The doctors attributed all that she suffered to her nerves. Did she feel oppressed, that was nervousness; did she feel at times suffocating and on the point of falling, that was nervousness; did she feel violent pains in her head, that was nervousness; and as, unfortunately, nervous diseases are those of which one knows the least, one nearly always leaves it to time to cure them; they also told my mother that it was not dangerous, that it would pass.

" My father had rented a little house in the country, at Saint-Mandé. I was there very often, but I never slept there at night. As to my father, he rarely remained over night in Paris without his wife; sometimes, however, when dining with a friend or visiting the theatre, or when some business would keep him late in the city, my mother was the first to advise him to sleep there, fearing that he would run some danger in returning

to Saint-Mandé at night, and my father felt quite safe in leaving his wife and his daughter with their maids at the country house, because it was surrounded by other dwellings and by numerous neighbors.

"Two years passed thus, and in the month of September, towards the close of the fine weather, I had gone to Paris and I had not seen my parents for two days. My father, after dining with his wife and daughter, remembered that he had an invitation for the evening in Paris; however, he did not feel very much inclined on that day to disturb himself and leave his family, but my mother, thinking that the party to which he had been invited would afford him some pleasure, and not wishing him to be deprived of it for her sake, advised him to go, and my father decided to do so. Naturally he would sleep there, since the evening would be prolonged to a late hour. Kissing my mother and sister, he left them, gayly singing, as was his habit. After passing an agreeable evening with some of his artist friends, he went to his lodging in Paris about half past twelve, and soon went tranquilly to sleep. Ah, mademoiselle, one must not say that one always has presentiments of coming evil! About two o'clock in the morning my father was awakened by a violent ring at the bell; he rose hastily, and asked himself if he were not dreaming. However, his heart was already constricted, and he felt a dreadful un-

easiness, for he was far from his wife and his children, and an accident must have happened to one or the other of them for anybody to come and wake him in the middle of the night. He opened his door and his porter said to him,—

"'Someone has come to seek you from Saint-Mandé, it's a neighbor — Madame Bercourt is ill.'

"My father went down, hardly dressed, and recognized an inhabitant of the village, an honest farmer whose house was next to ours, and this man said to him, —

"'Mademoiselle your daughter came knocking at my door and told me that her mamma was very sick, and she begged me to come and find you as quickly as I could. I dressed at once, and I've run all the way from Saint-Mandé here.'

"My father did not give himself time to thank his neighbor. In a few moments he was dressed and they started. When he got outside he thought as the doctor lived but a few steps away, it would be better that he should take him to Saint-Mandé immediately. He ran to his doctor's house, awoke him and told him his errand. A few minutes later the latter had risen, was ready, and joined my father, and the three began their journey. By chance they met an empty cab, and got into it.

"'Thanks to Heaven, we shall arrive the sooner,' said my father, and the doctor, who did not share his uneasiness, answered,—

"'It's no doubt a nervous attack, such as madame often has. Mademoiselle, being alone with her maid, must have been frightened and thought it was necessary to send for you, but all that should not make you uneasy. Was she ill yesterday during the daytime?'

"'Not at all, monsieur, I dined with her yesterday. I did not come to Paris until towards seven o'clock in the evening, and my wife was cheerful, looked well, and complained of nothing.'

"'I repeat, it can be nothing; but nervous persons are liable to sudden illness. When we get there the attack will perhaps have passed, and she will be vexed that you have been thus alarmed.'

"At last they arrived at our house, of which the front door opened on to the highway. My father rang; soon his daughter came to open the door, followed by the maid.

"'Well, how is your mamma?' cried my father.

"'I think that she's a little better, she is asleep at this moment' answered my sister, still pale and trembling from the emotion which she had experienced.

"My father felt like a new man, he strode down the path which led to the house, and the doctor followed him, saying,—

"'I told you so; it was a nervous attack, and it was not necessary for you to be frightened.'

"They went into the room where my mother was sleeping. She was on her bed, lying on her

back, and her eyes were partly closed. My father was struck by the livid color of her face, then the doctor muttered these terrible words, —

"'O my God! that is not sleep.'

"My father understood, but he did not believe that it could be possible. The doctor wished to make him leave the chamber.

"'No, no, I shall not go,' cried he, running to fold his wife in his arms, while he rested his head on her breast, loudly calling her whom he loved. 'No, I will not leave her — oh! she cannot be dead — wait, monsieur, her arms, her hands are still warm, her eyes are still bright. It is a fainting fit, no doubt — O monsieur, she is alive, one could not die like that — help her, monsieur, quick, quick, there should still be time.'

"The doctor knew too much of death to mistake it; however, he hastened to do all that science had taught him to recall life in one in whom it was not entirely extinct. While he tried various means my father held his wife's head in his hands, he felt her cheeks, her forehead, he entreated her to speak to him again, and in the next room my poor sister, seated on the bed and supported by her nurse, wept and implored Heaven to preserve her mother to her, for she also could not believe that she was dead. You are weeping, mademoiselle; ah, forgive me, I will stop, for I feel that I must weep myself."

After a pause the young painter resumed, —

"My mother was dead, mademoiselle, she had died several hours after being awakened, towards midnight, with terrible pains in her head, which her poor daughter had tried to assuage by applying all the remedies which she had seen her mother use in similar cases; she had died in the absence of her husband and her son, without kissing them, without bidding them good-by. Ah, mademoiselle, a sudden death is sweet, they say, for those whom it takes, because they have the time neither to foresee nor to fear, but it is very cruel for the persons who love them and are left after them; for those who, feeling so very sure of their happiness, enjoy it without entirely appreciating it. Such a shock is frightful, for nothing has prepared one to receive it, nothing has forewarned one that his felicity was fragile. When the lightning strikes one, he has at least seen the clouds gather, has heard the thunder rumble, and has understood that a danger threatened him; but to leave one's wife, one's mother, in good health and to return after a few hours and find her dead, not to have witnessed her last breath, heard her last words, believe me, that is terrible. These are the sorrows that are never cured. Time, I know, softens all sufferings; if it were otherwise we should succumb with all those whom we love, but I repeat, time cannot prevent our regret from stinging when we recall the loss of our beloved under such cruel circumstances.

"What a night, my God! What a night for my father and for my poor sister, so delicate, so childish still, but with a heart that understood to its full extent the loss which she had sustained; and yet that child, so young, so heartbroken, had the strength to control her grief in order to calm that of her father. When she heard his sobs she ran and threw herself into his arms, and said to him,—

"'My mother sees us still, she wishes that you should have courage and live for your children.'

"I need not tell you of my despair when, on being apprised by a friend that it was necessary for me to go to Saint-Mandé, I learned the fatal news. Like my father, I would not believe it. I went with him to kiss again her whom we had lost. Her pretty, lovable face was not at all changed, she was only pale. My father, who remembered that sometimes a profound lethargy had been mistaken for death, still tried at every moment to reanimate her from whom he could not resolve to be separated, even though she was no more. There are some people who very quickly leave the body of a beloved one whom death has taken; these have very little courage or, rather, they have had very little love.

"I will not pain you by describing my father's grief at losing within a few short hours, her with whom he had passed his life—twenty years in the very prime of life, twenty years marked by the joys of the heart, by all those vicissitudes

which mark the struggle for glory or fortune,—a whole career, which cannot be recommenced. But he had two children left, one of them a daughter, so young and interesting, and who had loved her mother so much.

"Nearly two years have now elapsed since that event; our anguish has changed to regret, we often speak of my mother, for in place of renewing our grief, it seems to us to soften it. My father sometimes made a remark to me which is very true: when death takes one of our acquaintances we receive the news with sorrow, perhaps, but as one of those events which must transpire in the course of nature; but if we lose our heart's beloved we cannot believe in our misfortune, and it seems to us that such a thing has never happened before.

"This is the history of my family, charming Rose. I have made you shed tears, but I do not know how to leave off when I begin to speak of those whom I love so much. I confess, also, that my mother's death suddenly changed my character. The follies and the parties of pleasure, the young men who had formerly pleased me ceased to do so; I gave myself with new ardor to study, I felt a desire to acquire facility in my art. It seemed to me that she who was no longer with us saw from on high all that I did, that she encouraged me, that she smiled at my success; and then, I ought to console my father, protect my sister,

and for that it was necessary to make a name, to acquire by my talent a noble independence, which I feel I shall attain by the ardor which inspires me."

The eyes of the young artist shone, his forehead seemed to radiate and await a crown. At this moment he was unconscious of the pretty girl who was before him, love of his art alone occupied him; but he soon returned to other sentiments, smiled at Rose-Marie, and said to her,—

"Now that I am no longer a stranger to you, are you vexed at having let me draw your portrait?"

"No, but what will you do with it?"

"I shall keep it always, it will be doubly dear to me; first, because it is a study in which I was more successful than I had hoped to be; second, because your features are there and I shall be so happy to look at it when I no longer see you."

"Shall you return to Paris soon?"

"This evening, mademoiselle."

Rose-Marie turned pale, and murmured,—

"Why are you going so soon? Yesterday you did not think of going for five or six days."

"Because I received a letter this morning from my father, he is wearying to see me; he is a little indisposed."

"You are right, M. Leopold, you should go at once. Then we shall see each other today for the last time."

"If I had thought that, mademoiselle, I should have been very unhappy. I shall come back — I shall come back as soon as possible. Now that we have railways it is so easy to travel."

"Yes, but I shall not always be in the forest, I have only been able to come like this for some days because I have been going to work, to help a lady, one of our friends who lives at Fontainebleau. She had some shirts to make — I know how to sew very well and to embroider on linen — and she begged my father to let me go to her house. As I like walking very much and picking flowers, and as I know the forest paths very well, I made a little detour and then I watched you painting. It seems to me that I should have done much better not to stop."

The young girl's voice faltered, she lowered her eyes, she plucked at her apron, she bit her lips, and did all that she could to prevent the young man from seeing that she had a desire to cry.

Many a young man would have profited by the pretty girl's emotion and obtained a few kisses, for when a young girl is much moved she has less strength to defend herself but happily for Rose-Marie the young painter felt for her as much respect as love. He had understood that innocent, ingenuous heart which had placed so much confidence in his promises, he would have blushed to have had one thought which he could not confess to her; then Leopold was no longer like most

young people, who think of nothing but pleasing and gratifying themselves on every occasion which presents itself. Love for his art had elevated his tastes, his thoughts and inclinations. Those fleeting love affairs which at twenty years had afforded him so much charm, now had no attraction for him. In love as in painting, he sought the beautiful, the true, the natural, and on meeting Rose-Marie something told him that she possessed all those.

"Mademoiselle," said Leopold, going to the young girl and taking one of her hands, which he pressed tenderly between his own, "you have told me that you live in the village of Avon. Will you be kind enough to give me your father's address? When I return I shall take the liberty of calling upon you. You will allow me to, will you not? And your father loves you so much that I am sure he will receive me well, for you will tell him that my manner to you was always respectful and all that it ought to be."

"Oh, when you are back in Paris you will no longer remember the young girl you met in the forest at Fontainebleau. They say that the young men have so much to occupy them in Paris."

"Have you already forgotten the sad story I have told you? Since I had the misfortune to lose my mother I assure you that I am not heedless, frivolous, and flighty, as I formerly was. Then I was like all young men who wish only to amuse

themselves, now I am steady, reasonable. Sometimes my father scolds me even, because he fears that I am too much so. I could not forget you, charming Rose, even had I not the happiness of possessing your portrait; but while you are here I wish you would be good enough to give me a last sitting, only a short half hour, that I may correct something which I do not find good enough."

Rose-Marie pouted very sweetly and seated herself in her accustomed place on the trunk of the tree.

"Since it will please you," she murmured, "and since it is the last time, I cannot refuse you, but if you are going to draw my portrait again it will not be good, for I have red eyes and I am in an ill-humor."

"No, no, it's not the face, that will do very well as it is, I shall soon be done."

The painter placed the young girl's portrait on his easel, took up his paint-brush and immediately set to work. His charming model at first kept her serious air, but soon an amiable smile animated her face, and Rose said,—

"Do you allow me to talk?"

"Oh, as much as you wish, nothing will please me better; to see you and to hear you will be two pleasures in place of one."

"And it won't hinder your painting?"

"Not at all, and even were I drawing your face at this moment it would not embarrass me. I am

sometimes present at the studios of men of great talent when their models are sitting for them, and I assure you that they are not among the number of painters who desire their models to remain completely motionless; indeed, they encourage them to talk during the whole sitting, and it is by this method that they catch the spirit of their physiognomy, that they judge them, comprehend them, by a look, a smile, a sentiment. What do they gain who order the person they are painting to remain perfectly motionless? A cold face, wearied and without expression, a portrait without charm, without the life, the character, which they ought, by all means, to have given it. Talk then, Mademoiselle Rose, as much as you please, I shall listen to you."

"You have related to me the history of your parents, and I am going to tell you all that I know of mine; it will not take long. In the first place, my father's name is Jerome Gogo; he has two brothers; naturally they are my uncles, but I do not know them. It seems that they early left their country; they are from the neighborhood of Orleans, and their father was a simple farmer like mine; they had also a sister, but she died long ago. I believe that she left a daughter who is my cousin, but I do not know any of the family. You may easily understand why. My father remained a farmer, a rustic, as they say in the city, while his brothers, it appears, have made money,

"I do not know, I cannot affirm th
sible that they still love my father a
occupation, their business, keeps then
prevents them from coming to see
I know is that my father loves them
often speaks to me of his two broth
and Nicolas, and sometimes exclain
I had the time I should go to see
brace them, to present you to them.'

"And what do your uncles do in

"What do they do? Well, it see
make money."

"That is not positively an occupa
you what profession they followed."

"Profession? Wait, the elder, N
is in business, a broker or banker, I
exactly which, and it seems he is th
other, Eustache Gogo, he makes—
can I explain that to you?—he wr
he writes things which they read, a
of his works are played in the theat

"Ah, I see now, he's an author,
ters."

"It should be so, mademoiselle; unfortunately it does not always follow. This title is profaned, prostituted, as much as some others. A man who during his life has written two thirds of a vaudeville, or who has put some little paragraphs in the papers, or who has produced from time to time a bad feuilleton, the subject of which he has stolen from several books, — these men also call themselves men of letters, the same as the dauber who paints signs calls himself an artist; but the public always ends by judging rightly of all that, and estimating each one by his works. It is possible that your uncle has much talent; what do you say is his name?"

"The same as my father's, of course, since he is his brother; he is Eustache Gogo."

"Eustache Gogo! that's singular; I've known a great many authors, I read a good deal, and I often go to the play, and I have never seen or heard that name."

"It is rather a peculiar name. Well, my uncles went to seek fortune in Paris and my father, who had no ambition, remained a farmer. He married and went to live with his wife in the little village of Avon, where my mother was born. My parents loved as tenderly as did yours, but my mother died when I was only five years old. I cannot remember her as you do yours, all that I have of her is a vague, confused idea which often, in my reveries, I try to make more distinct.

I remember that she smiled on me, that she was beautiful, that her voice was soft, that she was always kind to me; then I put all that together, and make my good angel who looks at me when I am asleep and who watches over me when I am awake. Ah, is it not always thus that one should picture her mother?"

Leopold had stopped painting; he was looking at Rose-Marie and listening to her with devout attention. After a short silence, she went on,—

"Now, you know us also. My father's name is Jerome Gogo, and anybody in the village will show you his dwelling. He is very simple, very rustic in his ways, for he received little education; but he is an honest man, in regard to that nobody can impeach him; finally, he is good, sensitive, a little hasty-tempered, a little lively sometimes, but never malicious or spiteful. I need not tell you that he loves me tenderly, I am his only child, I am all that remains to him of a woman whom he loved dearly. Desirous of insuring my happiness, and dreaming of a future for me which, without doubt, will never be realized, he resolved to educate me, and sent me to school at Fontainebleau. I am not very learned, but I know how to write well, and to keep accounts, and they tell me that I do not speak incorrectly. It seems to me that that is well enough for one who is destined to live and die in a village. Sometimes he has said to me,—'I was wrong in not

doing as my brothers did, I was wrong not to abandon the plough and go and establish myself in the city. I should, perhaps, have enriched myself as they have, and you, my daughter, could have made a good marriage and been happy.'"

"Did your father say that to you?"

"Yes, but I always tell him that I have no ambition, that I am happy enough as I am, and that I was not born to live in the city."

"What, Mademoiselle Rose, are you opposed to living in Paris?"

"Yes, that is to say, at times the idea of it frightens me, but now it seems to me that I could perhaps like it, with some persons. But I have posed long enough, have I not?"

"If you are tired."

"Oh, it's not that, but it is necessary that I should return home, for I am afraid my father will be uneasy."

"In that case I dare not keep you, but I shall not see you to-morrow, every day, as I have been in the habit of doing."

"You have said that you will come back. Is that true?"

The young painter approached Rose-Marie and looked at her with eyes which responded more eloquently than words would have done, for the pretty girl tendered her hand, saying, —

"Then I shall not be so lonely, I shall think of your return, I shall wait."

"You will think of me, then?"

Rose-Marie dared not answer, but her eyes were quite as expressive as those of Leopold, in fact, though neither of them had declared their love, the two young people already knew that there was no longer any happiness for them on the earth should they be separated one from the other.

"Come," said Rose-Marie, "I must go. Will you let me see my portrait first?"

"Certainly, mademoiselle."

The painter showed the young girl the canvas on which he had represented her. Rose-Marie colored on seeing it so pretty, and murmured,—

"But do you find that so very like me?"

"Yes, mademoiselle, I have never been more successful, I am proud of having so faithfully reproduced your features, your expression. I swear that it does not flatter you; it is you, exactly as you are."

"Mercy, is it possible! You know one does not know how one looks one's self. And are you going to take it to Paris?"

"Certainly, and,—"

"Where are you going to put it in Paris?"

"In my—in my study."

"You will look at it every day?"

Leopold took the young girl's hand and pressed it to his heart.

"I really must go now. Good-by, M. Leopold."

"Good-by, Mademoiselle Rose."

"And how long will it be, do you think, before you return?"

"I shall return in three weeks, a month at the latest."

"Don't wait until summer is over, then the weather will be gloomy, sad."

"Well, even if the weather should change, I will not become like it. Won't you let me escort you to the edge of the forest?"

"No, somebody might meet us. It is not late, and, besides, I know the way very well, and I shall soon have reached the village. Well, I must go. Good-by, M. Leopold."

"No, not good-by, dear Rose, but au revoir."

"Yes, au revoir, that is less sad. Well, I must go. Ah, it's for good this time," and the pretty girl, making an effort to control herself, waved a last adieu to the painter with her hand, and darted into one of the paths of the forest.

CHAPTER IV

The Robbers

Rose-Marie went on very quickly without stopping to pick her way. Entirely preoccupied with the person whom she had just left, her heart was so filled with the young painter's image, and her head so stored with his words, for she seemed to still hear his interesting conversation, and even framed replies to his remarks in her thoughts, that her eyes no longer perceived the direction in which she was going. She did not recognize the paths, nor the trees of the forest, for when our mind and our heart are far from the body, it is rarely that we can find our way alone, however familiar it may be.

At last, after walking for a long time, surprised, at length, that she had not emerged from the forest, Rose-Marie glanced around her, and by the objects which surrounded her realized that she had not followed the right path, and that in place of returning towards her village, she had gone still deeper into the forest. The young girl was deeply annoyed at this delay, which she felt would cause her father anxiety, but as, happily, she knew nearly all the paths, she understood very well

where she was and what route she should take as the shortest to the village.

Rose-Marie was then in a wild part of the forest and in a path which debouched on the road which led from Thomery to Fontainebleau. By this way the young girl knew that she might regain her home; she hastened to follow the path, and had nearly reached the end of it when the sound of hasty steps came to her ears.

She stopped, listened, the steps approached. For the first time, perhaps, the young girl experienced a feeling of fear, for never before had she found herself alone in such a retired part of the forest. She bent her head forward, looked through the foliage, and saw two men attired in blue blouses, with caps having visors which almost entirely hid their eyes, having the lower part of their faces blackened like charcoal burners, and who were coming towards her.

The sight of these two men, who were walking with a haste not ordinarily shown by travellers, increased Rose-Marie's fright. By an almost mechanical movement she stooped and hid herself in a thick bush which was near her. There, not daring to move, and hardly to breathe, she only tried to follow with her eyes the men, to learn whether they continued on their way. The young girl had only been hidden for a moment when the persons she had seen arrived at the entrance of the path. In place of following the road they

entered the undergrowth and stopped about twenty feet from Rose-Marie, who felt ready to faint, thinking that they had perceived her; but they did not suspect that anyone was near them, and the young girl, who had noticed with astonishment that these men had pantaloons strapped according to the fashion, and varnished boots, heard all their conversation.

"He'll not be long in coming. Are we ready?"

"Yes, but I tremble, I shall not have the courage, I cannot do it."

"Come, there's no going back now. You adopted my idea an hour ago. At present it's important to act, besides, I don't see that it's necessary to have much courage to stop an old goodman, who should have no desire to defend himself."

"Oh, but if he should defend himself we will let him go; we will not hurt him in the least."

"Hang it! what should we hurt him with? We've each of us got a pair of pistols, but they are not loaded and won't do more than frighten our traveller."

"Ah, no matter, we're doing harm enough as it is."

"Yes, but sixty thousand francs in bank notes will reinstate our affairs very prettily, and they are very much disordered at present. The dear man has this amount in his pocket-book; he had the stupidity to say so to the innkeeper down there, he

was talking in the courtyard, and I, hidden behind the shutters of our windows on the groundfloor, happened to hear the conversation."

"But if the man should recognize us some day?"

"Is it likely that we shall ever see him again? It is most improbable. This good man does not go into the society which we frequent, he's not a person whom one would be likely to see in a drawing-room, some artisan who has made money, some little shopkeeper who has come into a property; and, remember, we are well disguised—these caps, this charcoal on our faces—and I'll answer for it that nobody could divine who we are by our dress."

"That's very fortunate."

"But I hear a horse trotting, that's our man."

"O my God!"

"Come, don't act the stupid here and now. Have you your pistols in your hand?"

"Yes, yes, I have them."

"I am going to place myself on the other side of the road, you will keep to this side. As soon as he passes I will jump to his horse's bridle; you do the same thing. Don't say a word, only take aim at him with your pistol; I'll take care of everything, and I answer to you that it will be quickly done. The pocket-book once in our hands, I'll give the horse a good slap, and he'll start off with his rider, who, I am sure, will not stop to look behind him."

"Oh, I tremble."

"You make me ashamed of you. The traveller is coming; I'm going to place myself over there."

While saying these words, the one who had shown the most resolution, left the undergrowth, went like lightning across the road before him, and hid himself from observation behind a tree. His companion remained in ambush, taking, however, some steps towards the road and turning his head every moment to look with terror around him.

Rose-Marie had heard all, and her fear was only increased, for she understood well that the men who were but a few steps from her intended to rob someone; and if they knew that they had near them a witness of their crime who could tell whether the fear of being recognized would not lead them to commit a more dreadful offence.

The poor young girl hardly dared to breathe; nevertheless, curiosity, which with women is at all times much stronger than fear—at least one would so judge of it from the most ancient traditions, commencing with Lot's wife and finishing with Madame Bluebeard — sustained Rose-Marie's strength, and she softly parted the foliage that she might see what was about to take place, and while watching she prayed, she fervently implored Heaven that some one might come, some peasants or other passers, and that the two robbers would be obliged to renounce their infamous plan.

A horse's trot was heard on the road which led from Thomery. Soon a traveller appeared, mounted on a humble steed which held its head towards the ground. The rider was a man of a little over sixty, but hale, hearty, and upright; his round, cheerful, jolly face indicating health and good humor. His costume was that of a prosperous shopkeeper or a rich countryman. He wore a sort of hunting jacket of green cloth, with white metal buttons; duck trousers, which not being strapped down the movement of his horse had drawn up to the tops of his boots; finally, a colored cravat surrounded his neck, and a low-crowned, broad-brimmed hat covered his head and perfectly protected his face from the sun. Such was the person who advanced trotting, having on his saddle a valise and a night bag, holding in his hand a little branch of oak which served him as a whip, and appeared to have been freshly cut in the forest.

"Come, then, Mouton, come then, we are not very far from Fontainebleau and you shall rest there, you shall have some oats. Aren't you hungry, old Mouton?"

So saying the traveller struck the horse with the whip, but so softly that it seemed rather to caress his steed and to keep the flies from it, than to seek to hasten its steps. Hardly had the horse arrived at the entrance to the path when his rider called out in alarm, for the two men who had been watch-

ing, came out of the undergrowth, and jumped suddenly at the horse's head. They had no need of stopping him, for the poor animal seemed to be as frightened as his master, and stopped of himself. The traveller was about to murmur some words and supplications, but one of the men did not give him time. Placing the barrel of his pistol at the breast of the old man, he said to him, —

"Your pocket-book — quickly, or you are a dead man."

The traveller did not dream of making the least resistance. He hastened to fumble in the bag at his side and drew from thence a pocket-book, which he offered with a trembling hand to one of the robbers, muttering, —

"Don't injure me, at least. You see that I do not resist you."

The one to whom these words were addressed hastened to open the pocket-book, in order that he might be sure that it held the sum which he knew the old man was carrying. A glance sufficed to show him a wad of bank notes. Immediately, taking two steps backward, he struck the horse forcibly on the back. The animal resumed his trot and carried off his master, who was fumbling in his bag and seemed disposed to give his purse also to the robbers.

"That's finished, the business is done," said the man who had threatened the traveller. "The poor dear man would have given us his travelling

bag, if we had asked him for it, but what we have here is the best. Come, let's go, let's hurry, and get our coats and wash our faces. Come along, how pale you are!"

"Oh, it seems to me that I am going to be ill."

"Come, come, this is not the time, we mustn't remain here."

While saying these words the robber took the arm of his companion. He led, or rather, drew him into a narrow path which ran in a directly opposite direction to that taken by the traveller whom they had robbed, then they disappeared in the forest and the sound of their steps was lost in the distance.

Then only, Rose-Marie, who still remained motionless and listening intently, softly rose and ventured to leave the thick bushes in which she had been hidden. Pale and trembling, the young girl felt for a moment afraid that she would not have sufficient strength to leave the forest, for her legs tottered, she was obliged to support herself by some branches. The outrage which she had witnessed seemed to have paralyzed her senses. At the slightest rustling of the foliage, she imagined that the two men in blouses were returning, and believed herself lost. At last, passing her hand several times over her brow, the poor little thing forced herself to summon her courage, and said to herself, —

"These men will not return, they are too anx-

ious to get away. Poor old man, they have despoiled him of all his fortune; and he said nothing, he did not forbid them, very fortunately, for they would have killed him, the brigands, although they said that their pistols were not loaded. And I could not help the poor old man. Alas! I can hardly stand. Oh, I must get home as quickly as possible. I will never come back alone into this forest. When M. Leopold comes to paint in this place, I shall forbid him to come here. Mercy, I shall have to take the road which those two men have just taken. If I should meet them? Oh, no, they have escaped. They were not ordinary robbers, I saw that very well, and they do not live in the woods about here."

Rose-Marie left the undergrowth, crossed the road which was before her, and, after looking from side to side to assure herself that she could not still see the robbers, she went on, and had gone some steps down the lane which they had taken when her foot encountered an object which made her stumble. The young girl looked down and saw lying on the grass a pretty little pistol, the handle of which was carved in a very peculiar manner.

"Oh, that belonged to one of those dreadful men, no doubt," said Rose Marie, examining the pistol which was at her feet, and for some moments she hesitated, not knowing whether to pick up and carry away this weapon, but a sudden inspiration

came to her. She stooped, picked up the pistol, put it in her apron pocket, saying, —

"Yes, yes, since chance has allowed me to find this weapon, it may be that through it I may be able to recognize those who have despoiled this old man, who looked so good and cheerful before they stopped him. I should be very happy if I could help him some day to meet those who robbed him. I'll take this pistol and run as fast as I can to rejoin my father," and the young girl darted into the lane, as swift and light of foot as the fawn which flees from the hunter, and did not cease to run until she had left the forest.

CHAPTER V

Jerome Gogo

Jerome Gogo, the farmer of Avon and our little Rose-Marie's father, was a man of forty-six years. His countenance was frank and open, his blue eyes looked straight at the person to whom he was speaking, which cannot be truly remarked of all eyes; his mouth, often half open, and his thick lips did not denote diplomacy, but neither did they denote duplicity, and he was assuredly lacking in both these qualities. It is true that his features possessed no distinction, but they wore an expression of goodness and benevolence which immediately prepossessed one in his favor, and on becoming intimately acquainted with him, one found that his physiognomy did not belie his character. He was of middle height, but his broad, muscular figure indicated lusty health and bespoke him as a jolly fellow, the clasp of whose hand would be hearty to one who had the good fortune to be his friend.

Jerome Gogo was, in fact, endowed with very great physical strength, but he was neither of a quarrelsome disposition nor unduly vain of this advantage, for the kindness of his heart and his

peaceable disposition did not often give him occasion to avail himself of it, but when the moment arrived which decided Jerome to use his strength, unhappy the one who had exposed himself to feel it; he nearly always learned to his cost that the man whose intercourse with others is habitually gentle is the most formidable when roused.

Jerome was uneducated; however, he had learned to read, to write, and to keep accounts, but he had remained a farmer. He had not often had occasion to write, he no longer read, because that put him to sleep, and he had assumed the habit of calculating only on his fingers. It followed, therefore, that Rose-Marie's father had almost forgotten how to write, that he stammered rather than read, and that he spoke very badly. However, that did not prevent him from knowing how to sow, to rake, and to plant, and he found himself learned enough for his calling.

If Jerome had no ambition, if he thought himself sufficiently well instructed for a rustic, he did not think the same in regard to his daughter. Rose-Marie was her father's idol, she was his happiness, his joy, his glory, his hope; and he had believed that he should be guilty in not giving his daughter the education he had missed. He said to himself that chance, circumstances, might throw her into society which he did not frequent, and he wished, if that should happen, that his dear Rose-Marie could show herself there without

fearing ridicule, without feeling ignorant and embarrassed. This was why he had sent his daughter to school at Fontainebleau, and later to the house of some estimable women, who had willingly finished her education, teaching her how to employ her needle in a manner which nobody in her own village could have shown her.

Rose-Marie had learned easily, she had a pretty handwriting, she spoke better than the peasants, she embroidered with taste, and her father looked upon her with as much admiration as love. In his eyes his daughter was rather qualified to shine in the city than to remain in the village, and he often said to her, enfolding her in his arms,—

"My darling, I regret having to keep you with me in our cottage, with no associates but the servants and our neighbors, who are hardly more intellectual than my turkeys. I am egotistical to keep you here, for you have more wit than all of us put together. You are learned and speak well, you work like a real fairy, at fancy work, especially, and certainly you are made to live in society with the best people of the city, and you should find there a good match, because apart from your talent you are very pretty; and, then, better still, you are good, sensitive, and, finally, you have some qualities which one does not always find with beauty."

Then Rose-Marie would hasten to kiss her father tenderly.

"You are too good to me, dear father, and you regard me too indulgently, you think I am learned, you think I have talent, but if I were in the city all that would be only a little beside what the beautiful young ladies who live there know. Most people have been educated in boarding-schools, where they have all received the education of princesses. Let me live with you in this village where I am happy; in the first place, because I am with you, and, second, because I have never had any desire to know the pleasures of the city. I have no more ambition than you have had, but in Paris it might happen, perhaps, that I should envy the toilets, the handsome ornaments of the ladies, and then I should no longer be contented and joyous as I am here, where everyone is pleased with me."

Jerome Gogo found nothing to answer to that; besides, he would have been very unhappy had he been obliged to separate from his daughter. He would, however, have submitted, without murmuring, if he had thought that she could be happier away from him. Jerome's cottage was that of a countryman in easy circumstances, and what is more rare, of a countryman in whose house everything was as well arranged and as correct as in the house of a tradesman. For Rose-Marie, having perceived the difference that there was between a room in the town and a room in the village, even when the fortune was the same on

both sides, had endeavored to render her father's dwelling as well kept as that of a resident of Fontainebleau. The young girl had had much trouble in accomplishing this, because, in general, country people live in disorder, with a lack of propriety which does no honor to nature, and which makes them contrast badly with polished people. In a countryman's house one very rarely finds wax and a polishing brush, or a feather duster; a broom ordinarily lasts there for several years, sometimes for several generations. Window panes are objects of luxury which one does not find in all the houses, and paper, even, is not lavished on the walls and is nearly always missing on the partitions.

But, thanks to Rose-Marie, the interior of her father's house was arranged and kept with a propriety, which, in the eyes of the peasants, passed for elegance. On entering the room one knew where to place his foot and one need not fear to soil his clothing on seating himself. The old servant, who was their only domestic, had had some trouble in habituating herself to clean and to polish the furniture; she had, indeed, commenced by murmuring against a young girl's fancies, who wished that one should wipe objects covered with dust, which seemed to her very useless.

"For," said she, "what use is it to wipe off this dust today, there will be more tomorrow."

But Rose-Marie had set her the example, and,

little by little, she had understood the propriety of so doing, and felt that it was not superfluous to wash her own face every day, which, hitherto, she had not been in the habit of doing.

Five was striking on a cuckoo clock placed in the big lower room of the groundfloor, where it was the custom to take the meals in Jerome Gogo's dwelling. Five hours after midday and Rose-Marie had gone out at eight o'clock, immediately after breakfast, to repair to Fontainebleau, and ordinarily she returned in time for her father's dinner, which was served on his return from his fields. Jerome could not keep still, every moment he left the lower room and went to the door of the cottage, he looked far out upon the road, then came in and went out again, exclaiming all the while,—

"What can keep Rose so long, she knows that our dinner is always ready at three o'clock, that I then return from work, when I always wish to eat and talk with her."

"Don't you think, Monsieur Gogo, that you had better sit down and have your dinner while you're waiting for Mamzelle Rose? she will have had hers," old Manon ventured to say.

"Dine without my daughter, oh, I'm not hungry now. This is the first time that she has not come in before I returned from the fields."

The old servant tried to quiet her master's uneasiness by saying to him,—

"Mademoiselle will have been kept later at Fontainebleau by that lady at whose house she has been learning to sew, to make her dresses, they'll perhaps have had something that she wished to finish today. Mademoiselle is so obliging that she will not dare to refuse."

"Yes, yes, I know well that perhaps it is so; however, my daughter knows also that I like to find her here when I come home from work, that I like to kiss her and give her a little pat on the cheek; she knows that I am uneasy and torment myself when she doesn't come. And she, who is so good, so thoughtful of her father, how does it happen that she keeps me two hours waiting for her? I'll ask her that when she comes. Oh, dang it! for a long time she has been going every day to the town, I am afraid that she may end by having some unpleasant adventure; because she is so very pretty, my little Rose, some worthless fellows will follow her."

"O my God, monsieur, don't get such ideas as those into your head, as if mademoiselle would listen to the talk of the first one who comes along; she is so wise, so modest."

"Oh, I know that my daughter is wise, Manon, but virtue does not guarantee one from the attack of a coxcomb or of a blackguard."

"Once more, master, there is no danger of that from here to Fontainebleau, one is always meeting someone and there are houses on the road."

"Yes, when one does not come through the forest. I've often begged Rose never to come that way, but a young girl loves to run, to look for flowers, then, when it is as hot as it is to-day, one prefers the shade to the highway. My God, if Rose has come that way and met with some unpleasant adventure — "

"Why should you imagine that, monsieur?"

"Why? now don't you see that time passes and my darling has not yet returned? Oh, I can't bear it any longer. I must go to Fontainebleau, to Madame Durant's, and see if Rose is there still, ask at what hour she left, and then — Oh, I must find my child, I must know what has become of her."

Without listening further to the old servant, Jerome took his hat and stick and left the house. He was turning towards Fontainebleau, but had not taken twenty steps when he perceived a young girl, who was running towards him. He uttered a joyful cry, for he recognized Rose-Marie.

The young girl darted into her father's arms, and said to him, —

"Ah, you have been uneasy about me, have you not?"

"Yes, yes, my child, why are you so late in returning? Naughty girl! — but you are here and I am not going to scold you any more."

"My dear father — "

"Yes, yes, but you are very pale, your face is

changed, something has happened to you, and I had reason to be uneasy?"

"Yes, dear father, yes. Oh, I have been very much frightened."

"Frightened? Poor child, come, rest yourself, and tell me all about it."

Jerome went back into the cottage with his daughter, made her sit down, forced her to take a little wine, then he sat down and waited anxiously for her to disclose what had happened.

Rose-Marie then related to her father the crime which she had witnessed, and faithfully reported the conversation of the two men who had robbed the traveller. Jerome hardly breathed while his daughter was speaking, but when Rose-Marie had finished her story he took her hand and kissed her on the forehead several times, exclaiming,—

"But if they had seen you, those two scoundrels!—O my God! I thank Thee for having watched over my daughter. You see, however, to what you expose yourself in passing through the forest."

"Oh, yes, dear father, I have done wrong, but I will never go there again, I promise you, for I shall never forget this adventure."

"I believe you, you must have been very frightened, but I have been thinking of nothing but your situation; so near these robbers, not daring to stir, you would have been killed had they seen you, it makes me ill, it suffocates me."

"Calm yourself, dear father, I am here with you now."

"And you will not again go into the forest?"

"No, I promise you again."

"Let it be so. Oh, if I had only been passing by at that moment, how I would have defended the traveller whom they were robbing; with a stroke of my arm I would have extended those rascals there on the road."

"Oh, yes, you would have done so, but I, dear father, was not strong enough to defend him, and fear prevented me from even calling out."

"You did well to be silent; poor little one, they would have killed you, I tell you, — for look you, that is how a robber often becomes a murderer, when he is surprised by a witness whom he thinks will tell everything. And these men, you think, were not robbers or vagabonds by profession?"

"Oh, no, dear father, first of all they spoke very well, there was even something distinguished in their manner of talking; these were young men from the city, beneath their blouses they had fine trousers strapped on their well-polished boots."

"Indeed!"

"Besides, they said themselves: 'We are disguised, blackened with charcoal, no one could ever divine who we are.'"

"Some swindlers of the upper ten, apparently, who wished to try robbing on the highway; and one you say had less resolution than his comrade?"

"Oh, much less, it seemed to displease him to do what he did, and he afterwards blamed himself."

"They were young men?"

"Yes, both of them were young."

"If you should meet them some day, do you think you would recognize them?"

"That would be impossible, I did not see all their features, besides when I saw them from afar, striding along the road and coming my way, I was afraid and I quickly stooped and hid myself in the bushes; later, when they stopped in the undergrowth, through the foliage I could see their blouses and their caps, and at times a little of their black skin, but that was all."

"And their voices, if you should hear them speak some day, would they strike you?"

"Oh, dear father, I don't know; I was so frightened, what they said came to my ear like a whispering, I heard them and I did not wish to hear them, — but I was forgetting, I haven't told you all, here is what one of the thieves let fall, no doubt, and I found it at my feet in walking on the path they had followed."

Here Rose-Marie drew the little pistol from her apron pocket, and showed it to her father. Jerome examined the weapon, saying, —

"But this is superb, these embellishments, these moldings; oh, you are right, my little one, a weapon like that can only belong to one who is wealthy, for that pistol is a jewel."

"Was I right to pick the weapon up, my dear father?"

"Certainly, my dear little one, for look you, everything is interwoven, everything is enchained in the events of life; there is One on high who knows always what He is doing, and in allowing you to find this weapon, you a young girl who by chance had witnessed a crime, He has perhaps wished that one day you should make these guilty persons known."

"That's exactly what I said to myself, dear father, and now what do you think we ought to do? Shall we go to the mayor's house and relate all that I've witnessed in the forest?"

Jerome passed his hand over his forehead, and remained for some minutes in reflection; then he answered his daughter,—

"Wait, my child, on thinking it all over it seems to me that it would be better to say nothing. Oh, if your deposition would cause the robbers to be arrested, I should say, make it—yes, certainly, it would be necessary to do so, but I don't believe that it would put them on the traces, for you cannot give any definite description of these two men."

"No, indeed, dear father, that would be impossible to me, I should not even know how to say what color their blouses were; I was so disturbed, I seemed to have a veil before my eyes."

"I am right, then, in thinking that your evi-

dence would be of no service; that is to say if you gave it, it might cause you to run into danger, for if those who committed the crime learned that a young girl had witnessed it, that that young girl was my child, that she lived in this village, who knows whether, in order to get rid of a dangerous witness, in the fear that you should one day recognize them, they would not seek to draw you into some snare, commit a new crime perhaps. Oh, hang it, I won't hear of it; I am not willing that my daughter should run into any danger. I should no longer dare to let you go out alone for a moment; I should tremble incessantly if you were not near me; so it's perfectly decided that we must do nothing, my little one, nothing at all; not even speak to anybody of this adventure."

"No, dear father, to nobody. Oh, you are right, I shall say nothing."

"Besides, I have my idea, and I believe that you will sooner discover these thieves in telling nobody what you know than if you talked about it to everybody, so 'mutus,' as the schoolmaster of the town says when he is speaking to his pupils, which means, no doubt, 'don't make so much noise'; but I beg of you once more, my little Rose, to go no more into the forest; first of all it's not the place for a young girl, for besides robbers you might there meet some men who — some men which — finally, some men who

would say foolish things to you under the pretext of paying you compliments. Mercy, they would be as dangerous to you as robbers; but you have sworn to me that you'll not go alone into the forest, you'll not fail to keep your promise?"

"No, dear father, I will keep it, I promise you."

"There's an end of it, then, and I can now be easy. Lock that handsome little pistol in the corner cupboard; don't show it to anybody, and wait till it pleases the good God to cause these rascals to be punished, and the poor traveller to recover his money."

Rose-Marie obeyed her father, and carefully locked up the weapon which she had found, saying to herself as she did so, "If my father knew that I had made M. Leopold's acquaintance he would perhaps be more uneasy. I have not dared to tell him as yet; it will be time enough to do so when M. Leopold comes to see us, but I shall keep my vow and certainly I will not go again into the forest." The young girl who was mentally making this promise did not confess to herself that it cost her little to keep it, at that moment, because she knew the young painter had returned to Paris.

CHAPTER VI

Cousin Brouillard

An entire week had passed, and Rose-Marie had not once been into the forest. During that time the young girl had nearly always remained in the village, and had seldom left her dear father's cottage. Once only had she been to Fontainebleau, to carry home some embroidery, and bring back some more, and she had on that occasion, in place of staying for several hours, hardly given herself time to rest with her friends at the town. She had returned home as speedily as possible, and installed herself at her needlework in her own little room, the windows of which looked out on the road, and her father had been greatly astonished by the promptitude of her return.

However, Jerome Gogo thought he saw a change in her, he believed that his little daughter sang less than formerly, that she was less cheerful and that, without being exactly sad, she often seemed dreamy and preoccupied, which was contrary to her accustomed habit of mind; that sometimes she did not hear him when he spoke to her, or answered quite at random and with no regard to what he said to her. The honest farmer could

not notice all this without experiencing uneasiness, and one morning, after turning and returning several times towards his daughter, who did not perceive her father's hesitation, Jerome said to his child,—

"Well, listen now, my daughter, I told you that I was contented when you were here, that's true, it gives me pleasure to see you, to find you in our cottage when I come home, to be able to kiss you immediately when I return from the fields, but all that is no reason why you should not dare to stir from the house, that you should not go to see your acquaintances, your good friends in the town, or that you should hurry so much when you go to Fontainebleau; you needn't come back as fast as the postman, at the risk of giving yourself inflammation of the lungs, and I don't wish you to do so any more."

Rose-Marie looked at her father in surprise, and answered,—

"Why do you say all that, dear father? Are you displeased at seeing me working here?"

"Hang it, you know well that I cannot see too much of you, but I am not an egotist; what I wish, before everything, is that you should be happy, gay, contented, as you were formerly, and for some time past I have seen that you were not the same, my child."

The young girl was disturbed, and lowered her eyes, murmuring,—

"My dear father, you are much mistaken. How have I changed, then?"

"How have you changed, goodness, your face is always the same, I know that well; you are always gentle, always thoughtful for me, but just the same there is something, wait — in your eyes, in your look, I don't know what it is, but I tell you that you have no longer the cheerful air which made me so happy because it made me think that you were so. Besides, I think you must be dull since you do not go nearly so much to the town. I have begged you not to go to the forest any more, but that's no reason why you should not dare to go out of the house."

"But, dear father, I assure you that you are mistaken in believing that I am lonely, if I had the wish to go out into the town I should tell you, for I know well that you would not be vexed with me about it. It gives me pleasure to be here; I go less often to Fontainebleau, it's true, because the ladies for whom I work are not so busy at present, but I repeat to you that that deprives me of nothing. I am contented here, I please myself here, I am happy, dear father; oh, I am very happy at home."

Jerome appeared satisfied; however, there was something in his daughter's manner, even when she was trying to persuade him that she was very happy, which told him that it was not entirely the truth, and the farmer was always possessed by

the idea that Rose-Marie was tired of the village, and that she had too much wit and knowledge to pass her life among the peasants.

The day after this conversation, towards the middle of the day, a gentleman who had passed his fiftieth year, but who held himself very straight and walked with the lightness of a young man, stopped before Jerome Gogo's dwelling, This new personage was rather tall and just about stout enough; his features were shrewd, and rather foxy. He had little piercing eyes of a red brown, his pinched mouth and receding chin made his rather long nose look as if he were snuffing at everything around him; there was very little hair on the top of his head, but it was still sufficiently thick above his ears, and was brushed at a right angle on a level with his mouth, this hair being of a brown red mingled with gray and white. The physiognomy of this gentleman was sufficiently agreeable at first sight, for he nearly always had a slight smile upon his lip, and a tone of good fellowship in his speech; he was a fox seeking to imitate a sheep. As to his dress, it was that of a city man in easy circumstances, but who did not make any pretensions with his clothes.

"It's here — yes, it should be here," said the gentleman, stopping and examining the roses and acacias. "It seems to me, however, that the house was not so well kept as that formerly, but I haven't been here for five years, and they'll have

cleaned it; it's possible, however, that it may be dirtier inside. But they didn't have Venetian blinds on the first floor of old, of that I am certain; Venetian shutters, painted green, in a countryman's house, what luxury! Perhaps he has made a fortune by chance. Hum, that's not probable, and then, if he had made a large fortune, his brothers would be friendly and come to see him. Let's see, is there a bell at this door, no, a knocker, that's doesn't go very well with green Venetian blinds. Let's knock; I must hope that there is somebody there, and that I shall not have come for nothing."

The gentleman knocked; Manon, the old servant, came and opened the door and looked with surprise at this personage, whom she had never seen. For his part, the gentleman examined the peasant and made a little movement of the lips which signified, "The servant is very ugly."

"What does monsieur wish?"

"If I am not deceived, this is M. Jerome Gogo's dwelling."

"Yes, monsieur, he lives here."

"Is he at home?"

"No, my master is still in the field, it will not be long before he comes back to dinner, but mademoiselle is here. If monsieur has something to say to her father, he can say it to mamzelle, it is the same thing."

"Oh, mademoiselle is competent to answer any-

body — well, she must have grown since I was here last, it was five years ago, nearly five years and a half. Jerome Gogo's little girl was then about eleven or twelve years old."

"Mercy, monsieur, if mademoiselle had not grown since then it would have been very unfortunate."

"Yes, she should now be in the neighborhood of seventeen years."

"Mademoiselle was seventeen years old last May, and she is a fine, well-grown girl."

"Come now, truly, is she pretty? Is she much changed then, for when she was little she had a delicate, irregular face which promised nothing marvellous."

"Oh, well, monsieur, I assure you that mademoiselle is at present one of the prettiest girls of the neighborhood, even at Fontainebleau."

"The devil, she doesn't resemble her father in that case, for Jerome has no beauty to boast of."

"My opinion is that my master has a very good face, also."

"Good face, hum, yes, it's possible, and then in a village one is not difficult to please. Finally, you will tell Rose, for she is called Rose, I believe?"

"Rose-Marie, monsieur."

"Yes, it's still the custom in the country to call people by two names bracketed together. Yes, it's Jean-Louis, it's Pierre-Jean, it's Marie-Jeanne,

it's Rose-Marie — as if it was not enough to have a single name."

"Ah, well, but what does monsieur want, then," said old Manon to herself, looking sideways at the individual who spoke to her; "he finds everything wrong, altogether bad. Has he come here to humbug us," and the peasant resumed, elevating her voice,—

"Tell me, then, monsieur, if you should live in a village where there are five or six Jeans, a dozen Pierres, and as many Pauls, how would you make it understood which one you were speaking of if they weren't given two names to distinguish one from the other."

The gentleman seemed very much astonished at the peasant's reflection, but, like all people who will never understand if they are convicted of saying something foolish, he did not answer and resumed,—

"Then Rose-Marie is pretty, she has no longer any freckles? When she was young, if I remember rightly, she was peppered with them."

"Oh, that goes with age, monsieur, that's not like the smallpox marks."

"Hum, they never go away. I know some ladies well who employ I don't know how many cosmetiques to efface those spots from their faces, and they cannot succeed. For the rest, I am charmed that my little cousin is so good-looking as you say."

"Then you are a cousin."

"Yes, I am Cousin Brouillard, cousin on the distaff side, that's why I am not called Gogo. There are many people who are displeased because they are called Gogo; I know more than one — but that's not the question. Where is my little cousin?"

"Upstairs in her room; if monsieur will come in, I will go and look for mademoiselle."

"Yes, certainly, show me the way. You are the servant?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"You haven't been long in Jerome Gogo's service, have you?"

"Well, monsieur, I've been here three years and a half."

"It seemed to me that on my last visit, five years ago, he had a young and very pleasing maid, is she no longer here?"

"Since I am the servant, how could there be another one here?"

"Oh, that's not the reason. Why should Jerome have sent away his young maid, do you know? There was, perhaps, some gossip, slander, hey?"

"What should they gossip about, monsieur? Why should anyone gossip?"

"Oh, sometimes when a widower who is still young has a pretty maid — you know, the world is so wicked."

"I don't understand, monsieur. All I know

is, that the maid who was here before me left to get married; that's very natural."

"Oh, she's married; well, being in service never prevents anyone from marrying."

Old Manon led Cousin Brouillard into the dining-room, which served as a drawing-room also in Jerome's house, The gentleman with the fox's muzzle looked around him, saying,—

"Why, now, it's well kept here, this is nearly as correct as my house in Paris. It seems to me that when I was here five years ago they didn't have a pretty paper in this room, that it was not waxed, polished, stained."

"Oh, it's mademoiselle who has done all that, she said to her father that one could live as well in the village as in the city. Mercy, in the beginning I had a little cry when she said that it was necessary to polish the floors every day, but I made up my mind to it, and at present I find that mamzelle was right, for there's not a more genteel house than ours amongst the neighbors."

"Vanity, all is vanity! It seems to me that the little cousin wants to shine, and that she is the mistress here. Does she draw her father about by the nose?"

"What are you saying, monsieur?"

"Is this young girl good-tempered? Is she angry with you all the time? It must be very tiresome, at your age, to obey the orders of a child of sixteen or seventeen years."

"And why should that be tiresome to me, monsieur? Should not servants obey their masters, or is the world turned upside down at this hour. I will go and look for mademoiselle."

"Go and tell her that it is her Cousin Brouillard, formerly clerk of the minister of finance, otherwise say at the treasury, today retired and independent, who has come from Paris to pay her a visit."

"Oh, very well, monsieur, I'll go and tell her, the treasury — Brouillard, independent — well, I'll go and tell her."

While M. Brouillard occupied himself in inspecting the room in which he found himself, opening the closets and the drawers to see what there was inside, touching each object, old Manon went up to find her young mistress and announce to her the visit of her Cousin Brouillard, saying,—

"He looks to me very queer and odd, this gentleman, he is precious curious and gossipy, he tries to find out everything, and has something ill to say of everybody, I wager he's after no good."

Rose-Marie could only confusedly recall this gentleman, whom she had seen but rarely when she was a child, and he had never given her those caresses which even at the most tender age are graven on the memory. With her simple good sense old Manon had well judged the new comer. Brouillard had a caustic wit which he tried to hide under an appearance of being frank and obliging.

Like a cat he would scratch you while seeming to caress. His happiness was to say disagreeable things and to bring bad news. There are some people who would cut themselves in pieces to run and announce something fortunate to a friend. Cousin Brouillard gave himself as much trouble to come and inform you of a vexatious event, and did so with the air of trying to oblige you. The world is full of people of M. Brouillard's kind. They will make a thousand advances, proffer a thousand tokens of friendship. They will seek to obtain your confidence, surprise your most intimate secrets in order that they may seize every occasion to wound you in your dearest affections; while calling themselves your friend, they are never heard to say anything good of you, and hasten to come and repeat anything ill; but when anyone eulogizes that which you have done by your talent, or your person, or your character, they never hear that, and while their ears are closed to agreeable things, they do not allow a single disagreeable word to escape them. Then these people assume an air of the most lively interest in all that concerns you; it is friendship which causes them to come and say to you in a low tone that your wife has been sitting for a very long time in a corner with a young man, that she has danced with him three times following, while you were at the card table.

It is because of their friendship that they in-

form you that some journal which you never read has horribly maligned your works if you are an artist, your writings if you are a man of letters, and your pictures if you are a painter; it is because of their friendship that they exclaim on seeing you enter a gathering, —

"Are you sick, I find you changed; take care of yourself, my dear, you look very bad and it frightens me when I see you look so all at once."

It is because of friendship that they say to you, "Your coat is very unbecoming and your tailor has horribly botched it." It is always because of their friendship that they disparage the neighborhood in which you live and the place in which you possess a country house, and they come running to tell you that somebody has hissed your piece, or an actor who played in it, one day when you were not at the theatre; they find that you have paid too much for everything that you have bought; they come and tell you that everyone is laughing at your ball; finally, they criticise your production, turn your slightest actions into ridicule and disparage you as soon as your back is turned. Heaven preserve you from such friends, but if by chance you possess them, believe me, do not spare them. At the least little disagreeable thing they say to you respond by something very much stronger; that will crush them, humiliate them, and make them see that they have found their master. You will soon see them turn to a lamb

or a dove and become just as flattering as they were biting.

But it is not given to everybody to be able to answer promptly with lively repartee, and to know how to bring out something malicious or sarcastic. The people who have the most merit, the most genius, and the most talent, are generally the least caustic in conversation, they find some amiable thing to say rather than a malicious response, because true talent is jealous of nobody and has much indulgence for everybody; while those myrmidons who cannot make a name try by making much noise to attract at least attention, and are continually exercising themselves in finding something malicious, some little piquant traits, which they launch against those whom they cannot reach, in that kind of spirit which has been honored with the name of "blague," which gives them a kind of superiority.

To the portrait we have made of M. Brouillard, it is necessary to add that he was economical to the point of miserliness, while wishing to appear rich and generous. His vanity constantly urged him to give invitations and to make offers which his avarice prevented him from fulfilling, which very often put him in embarassing positions.

Rose-Marie hastened to go down to receive her cousin, whom she had not seen for such a long time. At the sight of the young girl, who presented herself gracefully, M. Brouillard was struck

with astonishment; her beauty was too evident for him to deny it. There are some persons before whom envy, even, is forced to retire.

"What, mademoiselle, can you be Jerome's daughter, you whom I saw so little, so pale, so —" M. Brouillard then stopped, he dared not say so ugly.

"Yes, monsieur, but it is a long time since you came to see us."

"You are right, you were then a little girl, you are now a young lady, a very pretty young lady; but, despite that, I can trace your features at present, you still have some freckles, but not so many. And your father, that good Jerome, how is he?"

"My father is very well, monsieur."

"Better still! Oh, he was a jolly robust fellow, but sometimes these strong men are carried off by the least attack — crack, one has hardly time to believe them sick. Does he still drink his little cup on Sunday?"

"What do you mean, monsieur, I don't understand you."

"I mean to say that he always loved to tipple, for he didn't do worse, it seems to me; as to that, one must distract one's self a little, especially in a village like this where you live like the brutes, that's to say where you don't know how to amuse yourselves, the bottle is a distraction."

The young girl fixed her candid eyes on Cousin Brouillard, which embarrassed his fox's face, and

she answered, in an easy tone which he had not expected to hear from a farmer's daughter, —

"We are perhaps not so brutish in this village as you seem to believe, cousin; as to my father, I think you are mistaken in saying that he formerly liked to drink. I have never seen any qualities in him except virtues, and I shall not believe those who tell me differently."

"Your house is very nice, very pretty, and is much better kept than it was formerly," remarked M. Brouillard, who seemed to wish to enter every room in the house. "You have made many improvements, and your garden, you must let me see that; have you any fruit?"

"A great deal, cousin?"

"Come, let us take a turn in the garden then. After that I will dine with you; that is to say if you have not yet dined, for you country people have not city customs."

"We have not dined yet, and father will be flattered if you will honor him by sharing our modest repast."

"Oh, I live very simply. I am just the same everywhere; make no change from your customs for me, I beg of you. What have you today for dinner?"

"I have pot-au-feu with green peas," said Manon. "Monsieur comes at a good time, pot-au-feu all fresh, and you will see that the soup is well made."

"Why, good enough; add to that one or two fresh-killed pullets, take some very fresh eggs from the nest, to be eaten soft boiled, make a little salad, that will be enough; I do not ask a little sweet dish for dessert, because you do not know how to make those, you country people."

"But, forgive me, cousin, I learned from a lady of Fontainebleau to make creams, tarts and cakes, and I have shown Manon, who knows how to cook such things very well now."

"Ah, you've been taught cooking at Fontainebleau; is your father going to make a cook of you?"

Rose-Marie reddened, but she answered with the same gentleness, —

"No, cousin, but my father wished to give me an education, he wished that I should be good for something; and we country people think that all the little details of the household should not be unknown to a young girl, and that they should make a part of her education, so that when she marries she may know how to manage her house."

"Come, now let us see the garden," cried M. Brouillard, opening a glass door which led from the back of the house.

"Mamzelle, I shan't make a cake for that man," said old Manon in a whisper, "for he is as bad as a red donkey."

"That's no matter, Manon, he is a relation who has come to see us, and we must receive him

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well; make a cake, and try on the contrary to have it good, to prove to this gentleman that you can vie with a Parisian cook?"

"Oh, yes, I shall make a good one, but I wager that he'll know very well how to find some fault with it."

The garden at the back of Jerome's house was about half an acre in size; it was filled with fruits, flowers, and vegetables; not an inch of ground was wasted; everything was put to use; and as it was perfectly well kept the flowers were fine, the fruits were large, and the vegetables were good. Behind a clump of hazel trees and of honeysuckle you saw a bed of beans and peas, and in the middle of this bed a fine cherry tree or an old plum tree laden with fruit; on the walls fine peach trees formed a perfect fan, and between them vines clung and slipped, then fell in festoons supported on the great poles around which they twined again. On every side the eye met a strong, vigorous vegetation, and all those favors with which the earth recompenses those who know how to cultivate it.

Rose-Marie thought her garden charming, for she saw there shady walks and flowers and fruit; but Cousin Brouillard walked in the midst of all this, saying,—

"It's an orchard, a vegetable field, and you country people call that a garden! It's badly laid out; oh, if you could see the garden at my

country house at Auteuil, that is pretty, that's very fine."

"But, cousin, see this bush of lilac, this honeysuckle, how thick it is, and how sweet it smells beneath it."

"I have a wild rose bush which is much better than that. What, pears already, that's a treasure, it should be ripe"; and Brouillard picked the pear and ate it, to assure himself of its maturity.

"How do you find it?" said Rose.

"Hum, it's not a very good pear; let us see what the plums are like?" and M. Brouillard picked a plum, then a second, and thus ate half a dozen of them, saying, —

"I wish you could see my Orleans plums, they are twice as large as those, and my pears. I have all the most beautiful kinds; if you ever come to Auteuil you shall taste them, and then you will say as I do. I have eaten some pears, your apricots are not yet ripe — that's vexatious."

To make up for this M. Brouillard picked some superb English cherries, and, while eating them, boasted continually of those of another kind which grew in his garden. The young girl dared not show him her fine flowers, her beautiful vine arbors, because she feared he would only find something to criticise in them, and she said to herself, —

"I believe that Manon was right, the cake may be excellent, our cousin will find it bad."

Jerome's arrival released Rose-Marie from the weariness which one always experiences in the company of those people who criticise all that we love, and who, wishing to make us understand that we have very bad taste, that we know nothing, do not perceive that they are lacking themselves in the first principles of politeness and good manners; that they conduct themselves like fools, and that they are all the time uncloaking their own envy and vanity.

"What do I learn," cried the farmer, as he came running, with a joyful air, "my Cousin Brouillard is here, oh, hang it, this is a very pleasant surprise. Good-day, cousin, how do you do. So you remember me, cousin, that's very amiable, only you don't remember me often enough. But it's all the same, — you'll always be welcome," and Jerome took M. Brouillard's hand and pressed it so hard that the latter retired hastily, saying, —

"Hallo, my dear Gogo, take care, I'm not an ox. Don't squeeze me so hard if you please — why you are a little aged since I last saw you, my dear fellow."

"Mercy, it seems to me that we are both five years older, or very nearly."

"Yes, but there are some people who don't show it."

"You've seen my daughter, my Rose. Oh, she is a Rose, too — she is the one whom you must have found changed."

"That's true, for she wasn't pretty when she was little."

"Not pretty, my faith, I've always found her pretty."

"There are no eyes that see so badly as those of a father, my poor Jerome."

"Do you think so? I am very sure, however, that I am not now mistaken in thinking her one of the prettiest in the country — in the neighborhood."

"She is very pretty, certainly; she does not resemble you at all for instance."

"That's strange; many people say just the contrary."

"To please you — for politeness' sake, but as for me I always tell the exact truth; with friends one should always do so."

"Dear Cousin Brouillard, I hardly expected your visit after so long an absence; can you give me any news of my brothers, for I think that you must see them, since you live in Paris."

"Oh, of course I see them — not very often though — sometimes. You haven't seen them yourself; they never come to pay a visit here?"

Jerome turned lightly, and his face lost its cheerfulness as he answered, —

"No, my brothers have entirely forgotten me, for they never even send me any news of themselves. However, I have written to them several times, or made my daughter write, for my daugh-

ter is an excellent writer; but I have never received any answer, either from Nicolas or from Eustache."

Cousin Brouillard lengthened his face as he said, —

"Ah, it's because your brothers are launched in society now. One is rich, the other a man of letters, and you a farmer. They think now that an enormous difference separates you."

"Do you think so?" answered Jerome, ingenuously. "But are we not still brothers? What does it matter to me whether they be rich or famous, I ask nothing of them but their friendship, their kind remembrance. Because I remain in the village and feel that my vocation is to plant trees and to grow vegetables, while they obtained an education and settled themselves in the city, is that a reason why they should have lost all affection for me?"

Rose-Marie, who was a few steps away and had heard the conversation, hastened to come to her father, saying to him, —

"But, dear good little father, why should you imagine that your brothers no longer love you; why should you harbor a thought which causes you grief or sorrow. If my uncles don't come to see you, it is probably because they have not the time. Somebody has told me that at Paris they never have time to think about their relations. If they have not answered our letters it is because

their business prevented them, and then, who knows whether they received our letters — if they were rightly directed — so many things are lost in the great city; as for me, I am sure that your brothers still love you, that they think of you, that they even inquire about you from people who come from this country, and that one day, at the moment when you least expect them, they will arrive here, just as our cousin arrived today."

Jerome kissed his daughter, cheerfulness came back to his face, and he cried, —

"You're right, my darling; yes, it is much better to believe good than evil; first of all it makes one happier, and then I would much rather think that my brothers kept their old affection for me than to believe them indifferent."

M. Brouillard who had turned his face to look mockingly at Rose while she was speaking, seemed disposed to utter some insidious observation, but at this moment old Manon appeared at the door of the dining-room and called out, —

"Hallo! The soup is ready."

"Come to dinner," said Jerome. "Hold, cousin, you go to the table with my daughter; I will rejoin you immediately. I am going to look for an old bottle for our dessert from 'under the fagots,' as they say. Mercy, I don't often receive people of my own family, and it is very natural that I should wish to treat them to the best that I have."

M. Brouillard took the hand which the young girl graciously extended to him, and went with her into the dining-room where the table was laid. M. Brouillard curiously examined the table furniture, the plates, the knives, and above all the covers, which he sounded one against the other to assure himself if they were really silver plated; then he seated himself beside Rose-Marie, who served him with an ease that would have agreeably surprised one in a young country girl; but M. Brouillard only remarked to himself, —

"Where the devil has this young girl learned to carry herself in society; it must be that she frequents other people's houses besides her father's."

Jerome returned holding a bottle covered thick with dust; he placed it cautiously on the table, while Cousin Brouillard followed his movements with eyes in which there was a foxy smile. The farmer finally came to the table, and paid the greatest attention to his guest, who managed to eat and drink for four while uttering little politenesses of the following nature, —

"Your soup is very weak, no doubt you use inferior meat for it."

"Oh, no, cousin, I take the best there is."

"Oh, sometimes I thought — because it's cheaper."

"Why don't you drink, cousin?"

"Did you make this wine yourself?"

"No, but it's the ordinary wine of the country."

"Oh, yes, the thin wine that devilishly rasps the throat."

"Why, hang it, we country people are not so hard to please; it's very good, it's refreshing."

"Yes, I am even afraid that it will refresh me too much."

"Are you going to sleep here, cousin, we have a bed at your service, and a pretty good bed, too."

"I thank you, but I cannot stay here, I must return after dinner to Fontainebleau; I am staying there with a friend, a man in very easy circumstances. He is expecting me this evening; I promised him to return, and tomorrow morning I am going back to Paris."

A slight expression of satisfaction lit the features of the young girl when she heard M. Brouillard say that he could not remain there, and the old servant murmured between her teeth, —

"Thank God, we shall the sooner be rid of him; if he had to sleep here he would never have found the bed soft enough for him."

"Come, eat something, cousin," said the farmer, filling M. Brouillard's plate, which he allowed him to do, pretending to look another way. "This is one of our pullets which Manon has fricasseed. Oh, Manon makes a very good fricassee. This dish is her masterpiece."

M. Brouillard swallowed all that was served to him without saying a word, and it was not until his plate was empty that he said, —

"Do you think that's a fricasseed chicken?"

"Well, hang it, what else could it be then?"

"It doesn't seem to me any more like it than I'm like a cow. Ah, when you dine with me at my country house at Auteuil you shall eat some real fricasseed chicken."

"Does monsieur think that I have fricasseed a cat?" said Manon with scorn.

"No, indeed, I don't deny that you used a fowl for it, a fowl that was a trifle thin, for instance; but I speak of the manner in which it was prepared. This is a ragout, a salmi, a stew of chicken rather than a fricassee."

"This man will make me out a donkey," murmured the old servant. Rose hastened to serve the green peas to make him forget the fricassee, which, however, was good, and Jerome filled Brouillard's glass, saying, —

"Why don't you drink? You must do better than that."

"Oh, but this is your thin wine — one must stay after dinner when one drinks it."

"Here are some peas from my garden. How do you find those?"

The peas were excellent, but M. Brouillard could not allow himself to say so, and answered, —

"I prefer beans."

That did not prevent him from taking a second helping of the peas.

"I think it is time to say a word to this fine bottle," said Jerome, going to seek the one he had brought from the cellar. "That's famous stuff, I must open it cautiously, — I must tell you the history of this wine, cousin; it's some forty-year-old beaune. When one has a friend to share it with him, then — "

"I don't care to know its history, indeed, nobody knows good wine better than I. I have an excellent cellar, I am very fastidious."

While Jerome was uncorking the bottle with many precautions, Manon appeared on the sill of the door leading to her kitchen holding a plate on which was a very golden cake, this she regarded complacently, murmuring, —

"I'll wager that he will also find something wrong with this cake; my, if it wasn't in obedience to mamzelle, I wouldn't serve it at present; I'd keep it for this evening. The idea of feasting people who find fault with everything. I have an idea that at his house he doesn't gluttonize as he does here, the dainty old man."

At last Jerome had uncorked his bottle; he poured for his guest, then he poured for himself; he drank and he watched M. Brouillard, who, after drinking, placed his glass on the table and attentively examined the cake, which Manon had decided to serve. This indifference to a wine

upon which he hoped to receive his guest's compliments, made the farmer impatient, and he cried,—

"Why, then, you say nothing — don't you find it good?"

"Find what good?" said M. Brouillard, putting his nose in the air.

"You ask me what?—why this wine you have just tasted — my old beaune. It's been more than ten years in the bottle."

"Ah, your wine, I didn't well taste it; let's see."

Jerome hastened to replenish his guest's glass; he sipped, then swallowed it, and made a little movement of the head, saying,—

"It's not beaune."

"What do you call it, then?"

"I say it's not beaune."

"That's very singular, everybody who's drunk it has told me that it was, up to our mayor, who's very knowing about wines."

"Your mayor doesn't know anything about it."

"What kind is it then?"

"Macon — there are many kinds of macon; but if you want to have beaune, look you, my dear Gogo, you must come and drink some at my house, for I have some famous beaune."

"At your house, but I have never been to your house; I have never been invited."

"You have forgotten it probably, — ah, I'm not talking of your coming to dine with me at Paris, I have only a little temporary lodging there, but at my house at Auteuil. Oh, there I can give you very good cooking; I have a very fine cook, a cordon-bleu, in fact. But isn't that a cake; aren't we going to taste it?"

"Mercy, cousin," answered Rose with a mocking smile, "it's because I am afraid that it will be a failure like the rest of the dinner, and I don't want you to eat anything else that's not good."

"Still, let us taste it," replied M. Brouillard, holding his plate.

The young girl served her cousin with an extremely minute portion of the cake, while Jerome, vexed at the welcome accorded his wine, refilled his own glass without replenishing that of his guest, and then placed the bottle near himself, on the side that was farthest from M. Brouillard. The gentleman with the reynard's muzzle perceived this manœuvre, and, after slowly swallowing his cake, he decided to hold his glass out to Jerome, saying, —

"Pour some for me, Cousin Gogo, although it be not beaune, your wine isn't bad to drink."

"Ah! That's different, cousin; I thought you didn't care to drink any more of it."

After Manon had placed on the table the most beautiful fruits from the garden, Jerome filled anew M. Brouillard's glass, and exclaimed, —

"Come, let's talk a little about my brothers; if I don't see them, at least let me have the pleasure of hearing of them, and above all of knowing if they are fortunate. It's a very long time since we parted, nearly twenty-four years. It was after our father's death they divided the property, that is to say, Nicolas arranged all that, since he was the eldest. I agreed entirely with all that he did in regard to it. Our sister was already married, and settled in Paris."

"Ah, yes, your sister Therese; her husband was not fortunate in his business."

"He died leaving my sister with a son; my poor Therese died also about a dozen years ago; but to do justice to my brothers, they have taken care of their nephew, and it seems that now he is a very amiable fellow, that Frederic Reyval."

"He does not come to see you either, does he?"

"No, but I will excuse him; the boy doesn't know me; he has never seen me, and they will not often have spoken to him about their brother Jerome. However, when my sister died without leaving anything to her son they knew very well how to write to me. Nicolas sent a man to me with a letter in which he told me that our nephew had fallen into his hands, but that it was not right that he should do everything for him, and me nothing. He finished, in short, by telling me to send him the sum of from six to eight hundred

francs. Mercy, that embarrassed me a little, but it was quite right, and I gave him seven hundred and fifty francs."

"Oh, then, you gave some money toward the education of your nephew. Well, well, they never spoke to me of it."

"They wouldn't think of speaking of anything so natural."

"But I don't believe that the young man has cost them much. Your brother Nicolas, who was already in business at that time, took the young man into his office, where he made him work. It's hardly two years since the young man left his uncle's house to do business on his own account, the business of brokerage, unlicensed, for he is not a broker. I don't know if he makes much money, but he knows how to spend his crowns freely. He is an exquisite, a lion, as they say at present in speaking of a fop, and, furthermore, he is a rake. He is incessantly engaged in parties of pleasure, in gambling, and in eating and drinking, and if he works one cannot imagine when."

"Why, truly! What, is this young man deranged?"

"I did not tell you that he was deranged, I only said that he was fond of pleasure, for the rest he is very much thought of in society, by the ladies particularly; they find him very amiable, for he is a very agreeable talker, that is to say he

makes fun of everything, but I don't admit that that is a proof of wit."

"Ah, well, but I have another nephew. Nicolas married in Paris, I met his wife once when I went to see him, when he was first married, more than twenty years ago; I didn't think she looked very amiable. How different from my dear Susette whom I lost; I invited them to come and see us, but they never came."

"Yes, and it seems to me they didn't invite you to their wedding?"

"No, nor Eustache either."

"Oh, Eustache, his marriage is more recent; it only dates back about seven years. He married a pretty woman, Eustache, that is to say, rather pretty looking, but she was extremely coquettish, a blonde, rather insignificant and much younger than he; she must spend a devil of a lot of money on her toilet, this woman."

"And Nicolas's son, is he a good fellow?"

"The son of the elder Gogo, oh, Julien is his name, he does not resemble Frederic at all. He doesn't seek pleasure, he is virtuous, settled, so they tell me at least; but, however, that's no reason why one should be proud of him, you know the proverb, 'Still waters run deep'; for the rest, he is an ugly fellow, Julien; a flat nose, a receding mouth, the picture of Nicolas in fact, and Nicolas is ugly, his fortune has not made him handsome. Give me some wine, cousin."

The farmer replenished M. Brouillard's glass; the latter very quickly drank the wine which he pretended was unworthy of his eulogies, and ate the most beautiful fruits which were on the table, exclaiming, —

"Ah, I have some cherries, very different from those; but how are you getting on with your lands and your cultivation? Are you increasing your substance a little?"

"Oh, there is no great variation in our business. I am not in trade, and for the rest I do not complain. By working some hours almost every day I have amassed a small amount which shall be my Rose's dowry."

"Oh, you have amassed something. Is it much? What do you call a dowry?"

"Not as much as I could wish, but at least there is enough to establish her."

"And you have placed this money at interest; at how much per cent? ten—twelve—fifteen?"

Jerome smiled, and resumed, —

"Let it suffice that I am content, cousin, and that the money is well where it is. It seems to me that if I am content the rest should not trouble anyone."

M. Brouillard stuck out his lips to the end of his nose, murmuring, —

"Oh, certainly, I only said it for your good, because I know some persons who take money at a very profitable rate of interest."

"My faith," resumed Jerome, clinking his glass against that of his cousin, "I am very pleased to know that my brothers have prospered in Paris. Nicolas is very rich then."

M. Brouillard made several grimaces, and tried to assume an air of good fellowship as he answered, —

"Oh, I don't know about that; first of all I am not one of those people who seek to learn the affairs of others, I am not at all curious. What is it to me that one of them has made a good deal of money, and that the other goes into debt in order to make a show; that another draws his purse strings after he has spent all his money. That's doesn't matter to me, I ask nothing of anybody; I have everything that's necessary, I live at my ease, I can offer a friend a dinner and a bottle of true beaune when he comes to see me. What can one wish for beyond that?"

CHAPTER VII

A Chat on Family Affairs

Jerome, who for his part most heartily wished that M. Brouillard would not so incessantly turn the conversation on himself when one was speaking to him of another, exclaimed,—

"By George, I am not curious either, I bother myself little about other people's affairs, but when the matter concerns one's family, one's own brothers and their affairs, that's entirely different, then it is very natural to desire to know all about them, how they are situated, what they are doing, above all if they are prospering; nor can that properly be called curiosity."

"I don't blame you, my dear Gogo," resumed Cousin Brouillard, "I am far from blaming you, you are entirely reasonable in what you say; and as far as that goes, I can tell you, or very nearly so, how your brother Nicolas is situated. He has made money by speculating in trade, and he has put it in the bank with the money which his wife brought him on her marriage. It was not the riches of Peru, twelve thousand francs, and besides that he only received eight thousand in ready money, the balance in woollen stockings, flannel

waistcoats, knitted drawers, and other articles of hosiery — for his wife was a hosier's daughter — as for that he has made a good profit from the sale of them. I know more than one person who has paid up to sixteen francs for a flannel waistcoat, and it was not worth ten; but Nicolas doesn't give away his wares, he does business in a very Jewish manner, at least that's his reputation in the trade."

"Hold, cousin, how do you know all that if you don't meddle with other people's affairs?"

"I have heard it said; I can't prevent what they say coming to my ears. The elder Gogo has been very fortunate in his speculations; he does other business beside, he discounts, lends money at a very high rate of interest; I believe he even lends money on security; that is he lends money on property, jewelry, on anything of value, — so some one has told me, but I cannot affirm it, people are so wicked in this world, — in short, he has made a good deal of money, and now he must have about twenty thousand francs income; perhaps more, perhaps less, I don't know. I don't ask for information on the subject, what is that to me, I ask nothing of him."

"Twenty thousand francs income!" cried Jerome; "that's a great fortune, indeed."

"A fortune! That's according to circumstances; that depends on how much one spends; but Nicolas knows how to get rid of it; he gives

himself airs; it makes one laugh — oh, mercy! these people who are only parvenus think they can hide their origin under an impertinent manner—ha, ha! It's very funny; after all, by Jove, we must allow these men their little peculiarities; everybody has them."

"And Eustache, isn't he also wealthy?"

"Oh, Eustache is another thing; he has become a man of genius, whether he really is one may be doubted, hey! Thus it is, however; my poor Jerome, you did not know that you had an eagle in your family?"

"An eagle," said Jerome, opening his eyes wide, "what nonsense; how can one have a bird in his family?"

"I mean to say a person who aspires to immortal fame, which is not to say that he will ever attain it for example; finally your brother Eustache is a man of letters, an author, if you like that better."

"An author, oh, yes; a man of letters; I've already been told that. But what kind of a trade is that?"

"It's not a trade; I don't know how I can explain that to you."

"Isn't it a person who writes plays for the theatre," said Rose-Marie, lowering her eyes.

"Exactly, my dear cousin, it is even so. The devil, you're ignorant of nothing so far as I can see. Cousin Gogo, you have given your daughter

a very careful education, since she knows what plays for the theatres are."

"Hang it! Haven't you noticed that my Rose speaks well, that she has good manners, a style; finally, that she has not the appearance of a country girl."

"I haven't paid much attention to it; you wish to make a lady of your daughter then, you have great plans for her — Ha, ha! Jerome, I see that vanity excites you as well as the others."

"Vanity, ambition, — on my faith, no, but I thought that it would not injure my child to have more education than her father, that perhaps, even, it would enable her to make an advantageous marriage."

"Hum, my dear friend, that's the way to prepare mortification, humiliation for yourself; when our children know more than we, and can take a higher position in the world they very quickly forget us, they are vexed when they see us, and blush when they speak of us."

Rose-Marie quickly left her place and ran to twine her arms around her father, as she exclaimed, in a voice quivering with emotion, —

"What are you saying, monsieur? that I shall ever blush for my father, that I should cease to love him because he has been good enough to give me some education? O that would be dreadful, indeed, that would be unworthy; can it be that there are children who cease to love their

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father, to honor him, to think of him with joy, with tenderness? Oh, that is impossible, is it not my dear father? You do not believe that I shall ever become ungrateful and that, even though Heaven should send me a great fortune, I could ever cease to love you?"

"No, no, my child, I am very certain of the contrary," answered the good farmer, who was softened by his daughter's warmth, and whose eyes were already moist with tears. "I know you, my Rose, and I am sure of your heart. Come, it was not to you that cousin said that."

M. Brouillard, who had not expected the young girl's movement, murmured while playing with his knife, —

"No, undoubtedly, I did not wish to say — besides there is no rule without an exception; give me a little more of your old wine, cousin. After all it's rather pleasant; it may even be beaune of the third quality."

Rose-Marie kissed her father again, and seated herself near a window with her needlework. The two men remained at the table, and Jerome resumed the conversation on his brother Eustache.

"You say, then, cousin, that my youngest brother is a man who produces work, writings, things that they print."

"Yes, indeed, some of his pieces have been quite in vogue, that, however, does not prove that they were good; he has also had some which

failed, he sometimes writes in the journals, he writes novels, stories for the papers, they call that literature now. Formerly it was necessary to produce something else in order to be called a man of letters; other times, other manners."

"And one makes a good deal of money selling brain work?"

"If one sold, indeed, only brain work one would assuredly win a great deal of money; but as it is always a mixed merchandise one loses sometimes; for the matter of that, Eustache believes himself a Voltaire, a Molière; ha, ha!—it makes one die of laughing. When he is successful he swells, he assumes airs of importance; he can hardly pass along the boulevard, there is not room enough for him."

"Has he then grown so very stout, poor Eustache?"

"Not at all; I meant to say by that, that vanity swells the poet, provided that he does not burst, like the frog in the fable."

"And is my brother, the author-man, happy in his home?"

"Hum! well, no, it is wiser not to speak of these things; the outside is very respectable, but it's necessary to look inside. Your brother Eustache's wife is not yet thirty, he is over forty; hum! that's dangerous. They say she is a coquette, but I don't say anything as to that, for I detest scandal. I may have seen some repre-

hensible things, but I shall not speak of them; I shall keep them to myself. But, hang it, my dear Jerome, since you feel so friendly towards your brothers, why don't you go to see them in Paris? Surprise them both one fine morning?"

"Oh, I have more than once desired to do so," answered the countryman shaking his head, "but I have not dared, for I said to myself, since my brothers never let me hear anything of them, since they leave my letters unanswered, it's apparent that they don't wish to see me, that they don't care to hear anything about me, and, in going to see them, I shall perhaps annoy instead of please them; that's why I have never gone to look for them in Paris."

M. Brouillard finished his glass, endeavored to look careless, and said in a thin piping voice,—

"Oh, you must not think that. I am of the same opinion as your daughter, no doubt their business has prevented their answering you; at Paris one is continually occupied, you must not blame them for it."

"I don't blame them for it at all, but just now you yourself told me that fortune had made them proud."

"Hum, pride is not the word, the foundation is good; I am certain that they will be delighted to see you. You will overwhelm them."

"Truly? well, then, my faith, I shall go and see them, and surprise them one of these days."

"Do you want their addresses?"

"Oh, yes, for they must be — I don't know where, at this moment, and if one does not know the address how can one find anybody in Paris?"

"Your eldest brother, Nicolas, lives in the Rue Saint-Lazare, number sixty-two."

"Write that, my little Rose, that we may know your uncles' correct addresses."

Rose wrote what her cousin had told them.

M. Brouillard caressed his chin and continued, —

"You have put down Nicolas Gogo, 62 Rue Saint-Lazare?"

"Yes, cousin."

"Very well, as to Eustache, he lives in another quarter of the city, 14 Rue de Vendome; have you got it?"

"Yes, cousin."

"Now, believe me, you had better go and see them, go and ask them for a dinner without ceremony, just as I have done here, and they will entertain you sumptuously, I am sure."

"We shall go, cousin, and when we are on the way we'll go to your country house at Auteuil, in order to pass a day with you; only, of course, you must give us your address also."

M. Brouillard made a droll face and answered, as he looked about for his cane and his hat, —

"Oh, yes, oh, yes, certainly, call upon me; — ah, I thought I had a cane."

"You are holding it in your hand, cousin."

"Ah, that's true. I am very absent-minded at times."

"And your address at Auteuil?"

"Anybody will show you, I am very well known, you can ask at the first house you come to; 'Where shall I find Monsieur Brouillard?' and they will say to you, 'At such and such a place'; but, forgive me, I must wish you good evening, I must get to Fontainebleau."

"Mercy, you have plenty of time, it is not yet six o'clock."

"That's all the same, I saunter slowly along, and stop to admire the points of view."

"If you don't know the way very well, perhaps you would like me to conduct you as far as the town?"

"No, don't take that trouble, it's useless, I am perfectly acquainted with the road. It is not difficult. So I'll say good-by, my dear friends. I am very much pleased to have found you in such good health and flourishing so prosperously. Good-by, my charming little cousin, will you allow me?" and M. Brouillard advanced to kiss the pretty girl. The latter did not feel flattered by this mark of esteem, but she dared not refuse, and the cousin's fox-like face touched the down of her fresh and rosy cheek. The fox, who was probably allured by the kiss he had taken, was disposed to take another from the other cheek, but the

young girl whirled lightly around and was already at the door, exclaiming, —

"You had better hasten, cousin, they say that the weather is going to change, and that we shall have a storm?"

"Is that so, I must get along then."

"Good-by, cousin, we shall come to see you some day at Auteuil?"

"Yes, my friends. And I have not an umbrella, — good-by, go and visit the Gogos in Paris, they will be highly delighted to see you."

M. Brouillard was already outside and soon was lost to their sight. Jerome reëntered then with Rose, to whom he said, —

"Where the devil did you see, my child, that the weather was going to change, and that we were going to have a storm? It's never been finer than it is this evening."

The young lady could not restrain her laughter, as she answered, —

"Well, dear father, I was afraid of being kissed again by M. Brouillard, and, if I must confess it to you, that hardly pleased me, for I don't like him at all."

"Oh, I am just like mamzelle," cried the old servant, who resumed her good-humor directly their guest from Paris was gone. "You know well, master, that he found nothing good in the house, your fruits, your garden, your dinner, even your old wine; he spoke ill of everything."

"That's true," answered Jerome, smiling — "but I saw with pleasure that that did not prevent him from eating or drinking."

"Hang it, does he think that I believe his boasting, 'he has everything of the finest and the best at his house'; one knows all about that. These people who are so difficult to please, so dainty at other people's houses, at their own homes live on stale bread and beans without butter. They say to you — 'Ah, when you come to see me, you shall see how I will feast you, you shall taste some good things,' but first of all they take care never to be at home when you go to their houses, or if by chance they are once obliged to receive you, they give you such poor cheer that you swear that you will never go there again. Yes, monsieur, yes, I have heard it said a hundred times, the people who make so much trouble in other people's houses, and for whom there is nothing good enough, at home are only stingy old skinflints."

Jerome could not restrain his laughter at the anger shown by Manon at the memory of all the cousin had said, and Rose resumed, —

"I could easily have forgiven our cousin for his unamiable reflections on our garden or our dinner, but I blame him for what he said on learning that my father had given me an education better than one ordinarily receives in a village; for in supposing that others should be ungrateful and

bad-hearted, it seems to me that he must be wicked himself."

"Come, I see decidedly that Cousin Brouillard has made a conquest neither of one nor the other of you. I confess that I also find him a little sneering, and deucedly difficult to satisfy. I like people better who have no ceremony. But after all he belongs to the family, and we should be grateful to him for coming to see us and for not having forgotten us altogether."

"Yes," said Manon, as she went back to her kitchen, "but I have a very good idea that he came to see us only to get some dinner and to make some mischief."

CHAPTER VIII

A Loss and a Change

A month had gone by since Cousin Brouillard's visit to Jerome Gogo's house. So unusual an occurrence as a visit from a Parisian relative was an event which could not but disturb the habitual simplicity of life in the farmer's cottage in the sleepy village of Avon; however, things very quickly resumed their usual footing. The worthy farmer, according to his custom, daily repaired to his work in the fields; the old servant accomplished her numerous household duties, and Rose-Marie employed herself with her needle and cultivated the flowers in her garden; each day which passed was occupied exactly as the one which had preceded it, and as the one which was to follow it would be occupied, and this is true of country life, year in and year out. An orderly existence, void of all excitement, which, monotonous though it seems to some, is nothing short of delightful to others. Habit is everything in life, the things to which one is accustomed are those for which one acquires a great liking, nothing more is necessary than to try to be happy in one's occupation, and when one is always doing the same thing you may

imagine that then one may be extremely happy. Rose-Marie went occasionally to Fontainebleau, to fetch or carry back her embroidery, but she remained as short a time as possible in the town. She no longer stopped on the way, nor did she venture through the forest, but returned with all possible haste to her father.

However, the young girl had nearly forgotten her meeting with the two robbers, and the thought of going through the forest no longer frightened her. When love glides into our heart it is not long in chasing out fear. Of all sentiments, love is the most fearless, and it allows one every day to laughingly brave the greatest perils, to play with one's life, to risk one's reputation, one's fortune and one's health. How many follies, daring enterprises, and audacious actions, which one certainly would not have thought of had one not been in love, will one not accomplish, then, for the sake of a pair of beautiful eyes, a sweet kiss, or the hope of a lovers' meeting.

To women, especially, does love give courage, audacity, a temerity worthy of our ancient warriors; how many volumes one could make if one were to cite all the instances in which women have shown a courage, a self-possession, and a presence of mind that men never possess in so high a degree. Without reflection, without thinking, three parts of the time they will expose their reputation, their peace, their future, sometimes even their ex-

istence, in order to serve those whom they love, and, in doing so, are very often imprudent and unreasonable; but then, women naturally listen to love rather than reason.

Nor are any of these fine things done with a desire for glory, but rather to satisfy a hidden sentiment in the heart, which, by its magic alchemy, can transmute the feeblest and meekest woman into a strong and daring spirit.

But, then, Rose-Marie, though a young girl with sweet eyes and modest bearing, would probably have been very willing to brave the robbers, and would have gone without fright into the most gloomy parts of the forest, if she had hoped to meet there the young artist who had painted her portrait; but she knew that he was not there, for Leopold had several times repeated to her that on returning to the country his first care would be to repair to the village of Avon, and to call upon her father; and then Rose-Marie had also firmly promised her father that she would not go alone into the forest, and we ought to believe that she would have kept her promise, even had young Leopold still been painting at the foot of the rocks.

Time passed without bringing this visitor whom Rose-Marie, in the depths of her heart, desired so ardently to see. More than once the young girl had thought of speaking to Jerome of the acquaintance which she had made in the forest;

she had said to herself that a child should have no secrets from her father, above all, when the latter was so good, so indulgent. But directly she began to speak of the young painter, an emotion, an embarrassment, for which she could not account, arrested the words upon her lips, and Rose still delayed that confession which she desired and yet feared to make.

Leopold had told Rose-Marie that he would return to Fontainebleau within the month. That term had now passed, however, and the artist had not yet appeared in the village. She, whose portrait he had painted, passed a great part of her time seated near the window which looked over the road leading to Fontainebleau, from whence she could see for a long distance; indeed, one could perceive the traveller who was coming towards Avon for quite a long time before he had reached the first houses of the village. Rose-Marie sewed, but her eyes often left her needlework to look down the road, then she would lower them sadly over her needle, and a big sigh would escape from her breast as she said to herself,—

"He does not come back, perhaps he has already forgotten me, perhaps he no longer looks at my portrait, ah, I must forget him also; I shall not see him again, and I will not think of him any more." And a minute had not passed before the young girl was again looking down the road as far as her sight could reach.

Jerome saw that his daughter was not so gay or cheerful as formerly, that she spoke less, and that she was more prone to reflection, but he dared say nothing, because he had noticed that his questions caused her embarrassment and pain; besides, the farmer was ever misled by the same thought, he was persuaded that his daughter was weary of her life in the village, and that she loved him too much to confess it.

Rose was not wearied, for one never experiences that feeling when one's heart is filled with love, and that is the most positive indemnification that this passion gives us in exchange for all the trouble which it causes us, but Jerome's daughter each day felt her hope of seeing the young man, whose looks and language had touched her heart, diminish. Love without hope is a slow poison which disfigures and destroys, and the young girl had not even the resource which ordinarily solaces in some small degree one who is in love; she could not speak of her trouble, because nobody was in her confidence. It was a hard burden at seventeen years of age to keep entirely to herself her love and her secret. A girl friend would have been so delightful, so satisfying to Rose; she would have shared her trouble, reanimated her hope, she would have understood why the poor child sighed without even needing to question her. Providence has decreed friendship, above all, to soften the chagrins of love. But Jerome's daughter had

no companions in the village, the young girls of her age who had remained ignorant or rustic had seen with a jealous eye her grace and her gentle manners, which developed with her mind. Instead of imitating her, instead of taking her for an example, the country girls had found it easier to keep away from one whom they regarded only with envy. People are no better in the country than in the city, on the contrary, they show their evil feelings more plainly, are more mischievous and more dangerous.

As the pretty Rose-Marie became more and more gloomy the roses upon her cheeks began to fade, the smile had left her lips except when she saw her father, before whom she tried to hide her sadness. Such was the situation of the farmer's daughter, when on a certain night, the inhabitants of Avon being still sound asleep, a vivid reflection suddenly lighted a part of the village.

Soon cries were heard, then the noise increased, voices called for help. The country people threw their windows open, and in the middle of the night they perceived a sky resplendently illumined, and houses reddened by the reflection of the flames.

"It's a fire, a fire," was heard on all sides, and on hearing this sinister shout everybody left their beds. Terror had already driven away sleep. Jerome was one of the first to rise. He went down and inquired, —

"Where is the fire?"

"I think it is at Father Thomassine's, that beautiful house which he had rebuilt a year ago, and just as all his oats and all his hay have been taken in."

Jerome waited to hear no further; he quickly put on his waistcoat and blouse. Rose and old Manon came running to him affrighted.

"What is the matter, dear father?"

"What can have happened, monsieur?"

"It's a fire at my old friend Thomassine's house."

"Oh, good heavens! And are you going there, dear father?"

"Do you think, my child, that I can remain peacefully in my bed while my old friend's house is burning; I must either be a coward or have a bad heart to do that. I shall go and help the others. You remain here, for you can do nothing to help, you, Rose, are too young, and you, Manon, are too old; besides, arms will not be lacking."

"Be careful, dear father."

"Don't be frightened. I'll look out for myself."

Jerome had already left the house, and was running towards the scene of the fire, accompanied by the men of the village. In such cases as these, neighbors do not wait to offer their help, whether it be for humanity's sake, or for fear that

the fire will extend also to their own dwellings. We would rather think that it was for humanity's sake.

Rose and Manon remained before the door of the house. Uneasily they watched the progress of the flames, which sometimes rose with frightful rapidity, and colored the sky with a reddish light, and they besought God that he would arrest the flames, and guard Jerome, whose intrepidity they well knew, from becoming a victim to his zeal and devotion to Father Thomassine.

For nearly two hours the flames instead of losing their force, seemed to gain strength; some children and country women who had been up to see the fire, returned, exclaiming, —

"The whole granary is burned!"

"Oh, what a misfortune!"

"And already the greater part of the farmhouse."

"Father Thomassine is ruined, he has such bad luck."

"Was anybody burned?"

"Two cows and the maid, Marie-Jeanne."

"Somebody told me it was only three calves."

"What are you talking about, nobody knows yet, besides it's burning still; the engines have come from Fontainebleau, but they say there's not the least hope of saving the farm."

"They told me that all the village would be burned; we shall do well to pack up our things."

Rose-Marie listened trembling, but old Manon said in a whisper, —

"Don't believe what they say, mademoiselle, I'll wager that they know no more than we do; but people are terribly fond of adding to misfortune."

At length, day began to break, and at the same time the flames seemed to lose their intensity.

"The fire is dying down," cried Rose, joyfully.

"It seems so," said a country woman, "but as it grows light the flames show less, that's all."

However, Rose was not deceived; the fire was approaching its end; presently the flame was succeeded by a dense smoke, then this smoke was dissipated, and ceased to obscure the sky. At last Jerome appeared, dripping with water, his clothing burned in several places, and having a great wound on his forehead. The first thing he did was to run and kiss his daughter.

"My dear father, here you are at last!" cried Rose, pressing her father in her arms. "Oh, I was so frightened about you — but you are wounded on the forehead."

"It's nothing, my child, a mere scratch that's not worth speaking of."

"What has happened at Thomassine's?"

"Everybody was saved, happily; I took Marie-Jeanne out just in time, she only had her hair scorched."

"Oh, how lucky!"

"The disaster is not so great as they led us to believe then, master."

"The disaster," answered Jerome, sighing deeply, "is great enough as it is; but I need a little rest, and will go and throw myself on my bed, and when I awaken we will talk about it, my little Rose — do you hear? we will talk about it; for this event has — come, I am going to try and sleep a little while. Slumber brings good counsel, so they say. You go and rest also, my child, you have need of it."

Rose obeyed, but on returning to her chamber she felt that she should seek repose in vain; she had been struck with the expression which crossed her father's brow when he said, "When I awake we will talk about it." She understood well that he sympathized with the misfortune which had happened to his old friend; but when he had done all that he could to arrest the disaster, when he had exposed his life to save another, he should have been satisfied with himself and not overcome with sadness; preoccupied by these reflections the young girl anxiously awaited her father's awakening. At length Jerome appeared, entirely recovered from the fatigues of the night, but his eyes had not resumed their naturally cheerful expression, and he seated himself beside his daughter and sighed as he looked at her.

"Mercy, what is the matter with you, dear father?" exclaimed Rose in alarm. "I have never

seen you look so sad before, has some misfortune happened to you?"

"Yes, to me, and still more to you, my darling."

"To me, I don't understand you."

"I am going to tell you all about it, my child, for you must know it sooner or later. Well, I am involved in this affair, I'll tell you all about it now. By hard labor and economy I had amassed quite a sum, ten thousand francs, yes, my daughter, ten thousand francs, while I owed nothing to anybody. Mercy! it was the fruit of fifteen years' work, and it was you for whom I had saved it?"

"For me, dear father?"

"Yes, my child, it was your dowry, it was not a fortune, but with a steady, hard-working husband, ten thousand francs would have been enough to set you up. Why, then, my poor daughter, this sum, which I did not dream of placing out at interest, for I know nothing of business, I kept in a corner cupboard where it had been slowly accumulating, for I would not think of touching it. I said to myself 'It is my daughter's dowry; it must increase, but never diminish.'"

"My dear little father!"

"Just a moment, my child. A year ago, my dear, you must remember, Thomassine experienced a great misfortune, a fire, a worse one than that which has burned his house to-night, leaving

him without a roof to shelter himself and his children. Money was necessary to these honest people in order that they might rebuild their dwelling, resume their labors, and nobody would lend it because they were always so unfortunate. My faith, the idea came to me that I ought to help them, and I carried them the money that I had saved for your dowry and lent it to them."

"Oh, you did quite right, dear father."

"You approve of what I did, that's so much the better. Yes, I think you would have done as I did. I knew that Thomassine was an honest man, and that he would desire to pay me as soon as possible after business began to go well with him, and you see that this year the crops have done so well, the harvest of wheat was magnificent. Thomassine said to me some days ago, 'Neighbor, in a few weeks I shall be able to give you a thousand crowns', but, poor, dear man, he did not foresee this event; you know what has happened tonight, my daughter, Thomassine has again fallen into grave trouble, and you will feel with me that he cannot even think of paying the sum which he owes me. Can I go and ask anything of these people who are overwhelmed by misfortune? So far from that, if I had any money remaining, it seems to me that I should be disposed to help them again; but as a result of all this you have no dowry, my poor child, and that is what causes me so much pain."

"What, dear father, is it that which makes you so sad," said Rose, taking Jerome's hand in hers.

"Mercy, my darling, it may well make me so."

"Why should you trouble yourself about the money? I assure you, my dear father, it's not worth the trouble. What does it matter whether I have a dowry or not? If anyone should love me enough to wish to marry me, do you suppose he'll ask whether I have any money? Oh, I am very sure he will not, he won't ask you as to that."

Jerome did not notice in what an assured way his daughter spoke of "he," whom she was supposed not to know, but he smiled as he answered her,—

"My darling, you speak like a young thing of seventeen years, you don't know the world; but I, although I have hardly quitted my cottage or my village, I have seen enough of it to know that money is what men prize the most, that money is a very necessary thing, and that it nearly always makes people happier. It's therefore very vexatious that your dowry should be gone, it has taken me fifteen years to save that sum; you can't wait another fifteen before you marry; but, then, this is what I have said to myself; since I can do nothing more to establish my daughter — if I keep her with me without a dowry, she cannot make anything but a bad match, marry some rustic unworthy of her — well, then, I must have the courage to separate myself from my daughter, and

I must send her to Paris to her uncles. They are in a position to do well by her, to find her a husband who will be congenial to her; and, hang it! when they see their niece, who is so pleasing, so refined, and who expresses herself so well, they will be proud of her, they will thank me for having sent her to them, and they will cheerfully look after her interests."

Rose-Marie was startled by her father's words, and when he had ceased to speak she looked at him anxiously, and faltered,—

"What, you are going to send me away from you, you wish me to leave you?"

"It is for your happiness, my child; oh, I don't need to say all that it will cost me, you know as well as I do, but we must have courage. I've been thinking about it ever since I came back from Thomassine's, for I've not been able to sleep, and I feel very sure that it will not do to shilly-shally about it."

"But, dear father, I shall be so lonely away from you."

"Hang it, I shall be much lonelier myself! The question now is, to do what is right. Besides, the separation will not be eternal, we shall not be two hundred leagues apart, and I can sometimes go to Paris to see you."

"But if my uncles should not receive me well — if they don't wish to keep me with them?"

"That is impossible; but, after all, your father's

house is always here, and you know very well that it belongs to you."

"Will you take me yourself to your brothers?"

"No, first of all, my child, my presence is very necessary here; I must earn the wherewithal to live honestly, there can be no question of idling just now, and, besides, poor Thomassine will perhaps have need of a helping hand, one must work for him a little; we must not abandon him because he's ruined. Then, it seems to me, that if you go alone to your uncles they can hardly send you back, oh, they will not have the heart to do that, and when they know you a little they will soon like you. Can there be anybody who wouldn't love you? Thus it's arranged, it's understood, and since it's necessary to show some strength of mind in this matter, you must make your preparations today; get a trunk, pack your things, and you shall go to Paris tomorrow."

"Tomorrow!"

"Yes, I will go with you as far as Fontainebleau, there I shall put you into a coach that will take you to Corbeil, where you will take the train, and an hour later you will be in Paris. Now, we have the exact addresses of my two brothers, that Cousin Brouillard gave us; you shall carry the paper on which they are written, and, above all, you must not lose it. For the rest, you are not awkward, you know how to speak, and anybody in Paris can show you your way."

Jerome kissed his daughter, and telling her again that his resolution was irrevocable, he went to his work with a satisfied mind, for he was persuaded that the means he was taking would assure his daughter's happiness, and that the pleasures of Paris would soon give back to Rose her cheerfulness and her former beautiful color.

As to the young girl, she hardly knew, perhaps, what was passing in the depths of her heart; she felt a keen sorrow at leaving her father, but, in spite of this trouble, an idea presented itself from time to time in her mind. It was that the young man who had drawn her portrait lived in Paris, and when they should be in the same city, she might meet him. It was no doubt wrong of her to think of the young painter at all when she was separating from her father, but what can one expect? Humanity is made thus, and it is probable that had she not thought of Leopold, she would have felt a great deal more sorrow on starting for Paris.

The next day the young girl, having finished her preparations, put on her little straw hat, which came over her forehead and hid a part of her pretty face. Her dress was modest, but decent and convenable. Jerome had put on his new blouse and his wide-brimmed hat; he looked at his daughter with pride, and exclaimed,—

"Oh, my brothers will thank me for having sent you."

In a corner of a lower room old Manon sat weeping, and said nothing.

"See, Manon," said the farmer, approaching the old servant, "I don't weep, and you may well think how much it costs me to separate from my daughter."

"Oh, well, you're a man," said Manon; "besides, you are trying to keep up just now, but when you come back I am very sure that you will cry as much as I do."

"That's not true; I shall say, it is for my daughter's happiness, and that will fortify my heart."

"Oh, well, I suppose I am an egotist, for I would never separate from those whom I love. Well, good-by, mamzelle, come back as quick as you can, if you do not like Paris. And if all your relations are like your Cousin Brouillard, who came last month, they won't be such very agreeable society."

"Hang it, Manon, hold your tongue, will you? Well, my daughter, have you taken everything that will be necessary to you?"

"Yes, dear father, oh, mercy, now I think of it, but it's not worth the trouble, I suppose."

"What is it, my child?"

"I was thinking about that little pistol that I found: you know, father—"

"Yes, haven't you taken it?"

"No, it seemed to me that it could hardly be of use to me in Paris."

"On the contrary, my child, on the contrary; after all that you told me, Paris is the very place where you are likely to discover its owner."

"Do you think so? Mercy, but if I should discover him, what must I do about it?"

"Act prudently, and above all, consult your uncle or someone that can tell you what you should do; and now go and get the weapon, my darling, and lock it carefully in your trunk; but, above all, don't speak to anybody of your adventure in the forest, so that if by chance you should happen to meet one of the robbers, he won't know that you were a witness of his crime. That is very important, my child."

"I'll be discreet, dear father, I promise you."

The young girl took the pistol from the place where she had kept it, and put it at the bottom of her trunk, which her father gave to a little country boy who was to carry it to Fontainebleau.

Then Rose-Marie kissed the old servant and glanced for the last time at her window, her garden, her flowers, and locked her arm in that of her father, who said, in a voice broken by emotion,—

"It is time to start, my child."

The father and the daughter went down the road, following the young boy who carried the trunk. As they went along Jerome often tenderly pressed the arm which he held under his own, and Rose did the same without being able to speak, but they understood each other perfectly.

The way seemed short to them, although they had made it almost in silence. On arriving at Fontainebleau they immediately went to the place from whence the coach for Corbeil would start. Jerome perceived with pleasure that the conductor was not unknown to him, and while handing him the trunk he recommended his daughter to him; then he came back to Rose-Marie and said to her, —

"Bertrand is the conductor of the coach which will bring you to Corbeil; I know him, he is an honest man; he will watch over you, and will carry your trunk to the railway. I feel more easy, my child, for I am sure now that you will arrive at Paris without difficulty, and once there you will know how to find the dwelling of one of your uncles. Go first to Nicolas, he is the eldest, and you owe the first visit to him, and if you find him kind, remain there. Wait, here is twenty-five francs, put that in your pocket."

"What shall I do with it, dear father?"

"It is always necessary to have money, my child; one never knows what may happen; besides you must pay for your place on the railway, and you will take one of the best, do you hear? I don't want you to go in a wagon; I want you to go in an upholstered carriage; then at Paris if you wish, take a carriage again. Wait a moment I was forgetting to give you the letter which I have written to my brothers."

Jerome drew a letter from his pocket, and gave it to his daughter, saying, —

"Here, my child, you will give this to them. Oh, mercy, I don't write like you, but my brothers know my writing, and they know very well that I am not a learned man. The principal thing is that I have told them that I send them my daughter, who is honest, hardworking, a true treasure, indeed, and that I recommend her to their care. As to you, Rose, I have no advice to give you, for I know your heart, your mind, your principle. I know that you will never deflect from the path of virtue, that is why I have no uneasiness in allowing you to go to Paris."

As her only answer, Rose-Marie kissed her father, and said to him, in an accent which came from her heart, —

"I wish to be always worthy of you, and never to have cause to blush before my father."

"Come, mamzelle, you must get into the coach, we are going to start immediately."

The coachman's voice caused the good farmer to tremble, for it announced that the moment of separation had come.

"Already," murmured the young girl, looking at her father, and two big tears ran down her cheeks; but Jerome would not give way to his tenderness; he led Rose-Marie to the coach, and put her inside. Then he took himself off, exclaiming, —

"You will write to me, my child, you will write, and you will come back if you are too lonely. Be good, and you will be happy."

The coachman snapped his whip, the horses started, and the coach rolled towards Corbeil, bearing in it the one who made all the happiness, all the pride of Jerome.

Then for the first time, Rose's father passed his hand over his eyes, and heaved a deep sigh as he said,—

"I shall be very lonely now, but it was for her happiness; for she was becoming sad, she would have lost her health and her cheerfulness. It must have been that she was weary of living in the village, and I have done well to send her to Paris; she will be happier, and I shall have that to console me."

And Jerome sadly went back to his village.

CHAPTER IX

The Railway Journey

Let us take the train which goes daily from Orleans to Paris, let us get into one of the carriages where the travellers are seated on luxurious cushions and sheltered from all the inclemencies of the season, and take a peep at them and learn something of their characters by their appearance and conversation. The carriage, in which there were ten places, had one vacant seat, being occupied by nine people only; in one of the corners, first, a large, strong woman of forty-five years, who had the questionable advantage of appearing fifty; her skin was a little tanned, her nose big and flat, which gave her somewhat the appearance of a Bedouin. However, this was compensated for in some measure by her eyes which were black and lively, her teeth which were very good, and one would not have remarked her ugliness had she not been dressed with so much pretension, and had she not seemed by her manners and speech extremely desirous of attracting everybody's looks and homage.

Seated near this lady was a gentleman of fifty years of age, very short, but with very wide shoul-

ders, a well-set head, a low and receding forehead, and hair which came nearly down to his eyebrows, protruding and rather stupid eyes, a very short thin nose, very high cheekbones, an ugly mouth, in fact, a very common physiognomy. Despite this he possessed an air of assurance, nearly of impertinence, when he thought anyone was looking at him. Such was the personage whom the lady, his neighbor, called indifferently, "M. Saint-Godibert," "my darling," "my little man" or "my husband," according as the lady's humor disposed her; but when in the carriage the big woman nearly always called her husband, "M. Saint-Godibert."

Seated next to this gentleman in the carriage, was a young man of twenty or thereabouts, dressed like all the young men of Paris who are in easy circumstances and careful in their toilet. He was not a handsome fellow, although his features were not positively ugly; but though his aquiline nose, his small mouth, his tiny blue eyes, and his light chestnut hair were quite irreproachable taken apart, they made an insignificant ensemble which was lacking in charm; finally, this young man had not an open countenance, and his rather wheedling eyes seemed to have acquired a habit of looking only on one side; perhaps the timidity which he seemed always to experience in the presence of his parents, and, above all, in that of his mother, who appeared to exact from her son the greatest sub-

mission and respect, might account for the reserve of his manner.

The person who came next, and who occupied the other corner, because there was still a vacant place at his side, was an aged man nearly hidden under a long buff coat, a black silk hat which he had replaced with a travelling cap bordered with fur, and an enormous wig, for, although it was only the end of August, this gentleman was covered as if it was freezing. On entering the coach he held under his arm a green leather cushion, which he carefully placed before seating himself; during the whole journey he preserved the look of ill-temper which he had assumed on sitting down. Such a travelling companion is not one of those that one would seek for, but as under the furs and double waistcoats of this old gentleman one might perceive a magnificent diamond pin, while on his fingers shone two of the finest solitaires, the Saint-Godibert couple regarded him with an air of consideration, and more than once even the husband had tried to attract his attention by saying to his son,—

"Julien, take care not to incommode, monsieur, he seems uncomfortable; do not get too near him."

The young man held himself so as not to touch the gentleman posed on the leather cushions, and the latter only responded to his politeness with impatient and snappish exclamations.

Upon the other bench was seated, opposite to

Madame Saint-Godibert, a well-curled gentleman, who seemed very much pleased with himself, delighted to find himself on the railway, and delighted with his travelling companions. This gentleman, who had a fresh skin and vermilion lips, and who resembled those wax figures which one sees with well-dressed hair in the hairdressers' shops, did not remain for two moments without looking at the ends of his satin cravat or caressing his whiskers. His person was embalmed with perfumes, a mixture of heliotrope, jasmine, rose and patchouli, in which it was difficult to find which predominated, but which immediately came to your nose and gave you the headache.

Near this odoriferous gentleman sat a young and very pretty woman whose face was piquant, lively and provoking even; the beautiful, deep blue eyes, which were not often lowered, with a fresh mouth and beautiful teeth, a mischievous smile, and brown hair, made a very agreeable physiognomy, to which her remarkable roundness of figure, and her ravishing waist, lent still more charm. The dress of this young woman was coquettish in the extreme, and delightfully enhanced and set off her advantages of face and figure. Her face owed nothing to intellectual expression, in which she was utterly lacking, although she was too charming to appear stupid; she looked rather like a pleasure-seeking, gaudy, fluttering butterfly than a person who was correct and staid. The little straw

hat which she wore came far over her eyes and did not allow one to see her face except when she wished it; but it was worn in such a manner as to provoke looks of admiration. Men always admire a woman more when they find it difficult immediately to see her face. Broad-brimmed hats will always be appreciated by women who understand their own interests. Do you wish to have a proof of this go into some public place where there are many ladies, where one alone has a hat which makes it hard to see her features while the others have those of the fashion which hides nothing of their pretty faces, the men will pay much less attention to the one who shows herself than to the woman who seeks to evade glances, and it is on the latter that they nearly always fix their eyeglasses and their lorgnettes. But that the gentleman of the perfume was not the husband of this pretty woman could be seen immediately by the manner in which he spoke to her, and the fear in which he seemed of rumpling her dress or disarranging her hat. For her part, the lady, while answering her travelling companion, seemed to be more occupied in playing the coquette and, above all, in returning the very expressive glances cast upon her by her neighbor at the right, than in attending to him.

This neighbor was a very elegant young man, a rather handsome fellow, having, however, that air of being no better than he should be which is often

so enticing to a woman. His wide and rather round forehead was shaded by a bush of irreproachable black hair, his mustache and the beard which curled round the lower part of his face were of the same color. The young man was tall, well-made, of a fine figure, and appeared to be perfectly aware of his advantages.

After this handsome dark fellow came still another young man, who seemed to be a little older than his neighbor and to form a striking contrast to him, not by his dress, for both of these gentlemen were well, and even elegantly clad; but by his figure and his face. The latter was of middle height and sufficiently well set up, but his face, horribly marked by smallpox, was excessively ugly. Puffings of flesh hid his eyes, which resembled two little holes of light at the bottom of a bad night-light. His mouth was prominent, and when he opened it one perceived that nearly all his teeth were missing, while his nose, also defaced by the smallpox, had one nostril a great deal larger than the other. Altogether, he was not a very agreeable object to those who sat opposite to him, and the expression of his face, which indicated envy, malice and spite, only increased his ugliness. Finally, the fifth place, which was in another corner, was filled, or rather occupied, by a very thin man, who might have been forty years of age, and was perfectly dirty from his head to his feet. This gentleman had an old, threadbare

black topcoat, stained and darned in several places, and which hardly came down to the middle of his knees, and trousers of an olive or yellowish cloth, it was difficult to be certain of the color. The aforesaid trousers, also stained in several places, had, moreover, on each knee a large square patch, which being much newer than the rest of the material still possessed a certain vivid coloring which contrasted strongly with the body of the garment. These trousers, while they did not come down lower than the ankle, were strapped down under the left foot, but no strap was worn on the right, probably owing to some unforeseen accident; coarse boots, trodden down at the heel, which bore the marks of many a tramp and were entirely without evidence of ever being brushed, finished the lower part of his costume.

For the rest a little end of black stuff, frayed and threadbare, indicated a waistcoat; a colored handkerchief rolled into a string served for a cravat, and was so tightly drawn around his neck that one would have believed the traveller wished to strangle himself upon the road; but the most curious part of his costume was a little cape of old black cloth which was affixed to his topcoat, serving as a short cloak or mantle at the will of the owner, but which, in fact, did not even serve to protect him from cold or rain and which hardly came down to the middle of the fore-arm. A round hat which was neither of beaver or silk

completed this gentleman's outfit; this hat, unique of its kind, was certainly worth looking at and appeared to have been made with a piece of merino. The crown was very low and the brim very narrow, and all around the crown the stuff was laid in scanty but very inelegant plaits. Under this singular hat, picture to yourself a head like that of a Cossack, an almost total absence of nose, that which stood in place of it being so indented in his countenance that one perceived only two openings which threatened the heavens. This was the person who sat opposite the gentleman throned upon the leather cushion, having one of the corner seats, and who seemed unused to being seated so softly and in such fine company; he passed his time in feeling, with hands devoid of gloves, the stuff of the cushion on which he was seated, muttering between his teeth as follows, —

"That's fine — this is good — this must have cost a good bit — beautiful coaches, one feels puffed up with pride sitting here, but if I hadn't been in a hurry to get there, — how often have I been taken in like that; they tell you that the wagons are full to force you to pay for dearer seats. Happily Bichat pays for the journey!"

These monologues had begun from the moment that the gentleman with the merino hat had come into the carriage and he had come there first of all, which had given him a chance to take one of the corner seats.

To each person who followed him into the carriage the dirty gentleman took off his hat and murmured, —

"Good-day, monsieur, madame, and the company."

This politeness was not very highly appreciated by the travellers, the greater part of whom made no response to it; indeed, after looking at the one who saluted them, many of them turned the head with a disdainful air, not caring to speak to him.

The Saint-Godibert family had at first placed themselves in front of the man with the merino hat, but the latter so obstinately continued to smile and bow to them that the lady had brusquely changed her corner and her husband and son settled themselves near her, all three turning their heads towards the opposite doorway, hoping that this would put an end to the audacity of the stranger in entering into conversation with them; an attempt which they found very disagreeable on the part of a man so badly dressed.

The well-curled dandy and the lady who accompanied him received the same salutation; the lively brunette had at first taken the place in the corner, but when the handsome, dark young man had come into the coach this lady had given her place to the gentleman who accompanied her, under the pretext that the sight of the country gave her a pain in her eyes when they were going so quickly.

As to the old gentleman seated on the leather cushion, he had only responded to the politeness of the one who was seated opposite to him by low grumblings and swearings, and he had looked at the man with the merino hat with an air of such ill-humor that the latter dared not bow to him nor smile at him again.

The big, dark young man uttered an exclamation of surprise on perceiving the Saint-Godibert family in the carriage, and exclaimed, —

"What, my aunt, my uncle, and Julien on a railway, why, by what chance do I meet you here? and my aunt, who is so afraid of travelling in this manner?"

"That is to say," answered the fine lady, "that it was your uncle who was doubtful about these railways and not I. I have a hundred times evinced a desire to travel in this manner to Rouen. Yes, Frederic — oh, you needn't laugh — ah, this is M. Richard who is with you, I believe."

These words were addressed to M. Frederic's neighbor, the young man who had one nostril larger than the other. He bowed low to Madame Saint-Godibert and her husband, and then extended his hand to her son, saying, —

"Good-day, Julien, how do you do?"

"Very well, I thank you," answered young Saint-Godibert, who had already shaken hands with his Cousin Frederic.

M. Saint-Godibert, who was using his handkerchief and had not yet answered his wife, said then, with an important air, —

"I have never been in the least afraid of railways, my darling, but I do not wish to contradict you, and it is only in complaisance to my wishes that you are doing that which otherwise you would not have done."

"It seems to me, monsieur, that that is not my custom; why were you positively bound to go to Orleans when I wished to visit Rouen?"

"Because of the tonnelles, my darling."

"Tunnels, you mean, my dear uncle," cried the big young man, laughing and glancing at his neighbor, the pretty brunette, who immediately answered with a very encouraging smile.

"Tunnel, yes, I knew very well that I was mistaken, but at any rate they are subterranean passages. You do not like them, Angélique; you detest darkness, since you won't even sleep without a light."

"That's true, I confess that travel underground seems very venturesome to me, but since I had decided upon doing so — "

"But why should you make yourself ill! I am taking you first to Orleans because there are no long tunnels to pass through. We will go to Rouen later on."

"Both of them are decidedly afraid," said the young man who was pock-marked, winking at his

neighbor, and the latter, whom they called Frederic, resumed, while gently pushing the seductive brunette's knee, —

"I adore tunnels, I find nothing more amusing than to travel in the darkness with persons whom one does not know."

"They have lamps, somebody tells me that they have lamps to light in the carriages, without which, ha, ha — mercy, people would be doing all kinds of foolish things."

These words were uttered by the man with the Cossack's head and the plaited hat. Nobody answered this gentleman, the Saint-Godiberts put on their grandest airs, the pretty brunette arranged her hair, her gentleman caressed his mustache, and the old gentleman with the diamonds swore between his teeth, —

"Confound it! What a nuisance to travel with people like these — what do I care whether there is light or not! Ouf!"

"But how is this," resumed the big, dark young man, "this is an impromptu party of pleasure that you have arranged, dear uncle, is it not, for you three alone?"

"We had asked my brother, the literary man, and his wife also, but they refused, under the pretext that they had already been to Fontainebleau this summer."

"Oh, yes, in fact I recall now that about six months ago my Uncle Mondigo invited me to

accompany them in a country excursion; I had even promised my pretty aunt that I would join them with Dernesty, but I could not, and then I reminded myself that the Marmodins and M. Roquet would be of the party, and, frankly, that did not make me very eager to be with them. Oh, if there had been nobody there except Madame Marmodin, all well and good; she is very pleasant, she talks well, she is very gay and cheerful, but her husband — oh, by Jove! That man is truly killing with his mania for the Romans, of whom he is incessantly talking, of the footgear, the mantle, the tunic which they wore. I ask you what does it matter to me that the patricians had different footgear from the plebeians. I don't care a bit about the ancients, I'd a thousand times rather look at a little hat or a charming bonnet on the head of a pretty woman than to know all the ancient fashions."

"And besides," resumed M. Richard, pushing Frederic's elbow, and indicating the Cossack at his right, "We have also some very curious headdresses nowadays."

The big young man had been too much occupied with his neighbor up to this time to pay any attention to the gentleman who had only one trousers' strap, but when he saw the hat made of plaited merino, and examined the person who wore it, Frederic burst into a shout of prolonged laughter, and his gayety infected M. Richard and

his neighbor. The gentleman who was with the pretty brunette believed it his duty to laugh also, although he did not know why they were laughing.

"Oh, truly, this is delicious, this is exceedingly funny," exclaimed Frederic, laughing until he cried, "this pays one for the whole journey to Orleans, one doesn't see such things as these at exhibitions of the products of industry."

"It deserves a patent, however," said the pock-marked young man.

"Ha, ha, I would much rather bonnet him with it, I have a great desire to try to do it."

A severe look from his aunt prevented M. Frederic from committing this folly, which but for that he would have been capable of doing. His pretty neighbor shared his gayety and looked sidelong at him, as she covered her face with her handkerchief in order to laugh at her ease. The Saint-Godibert couple believed that it would impair their dignity to laugh, but their son did the same as his cousin, and the gentleman of the odors leaned towards his lady, and said to her, —

"My dear Irma, what do they find so funny, I didn't quite hear what they said." The young woman shrugged her shoulders slightly and answered, —

"My faith, if you can't see what is so apparent to everybody's eyes why do you wish that I should tell you?"

"Oh, now I understand what it is," cried this

gentleman, who wished to appear as mischievous as the others, but who did not understand any more than he did before.

The old gentleman with the diamonds was the only one who swore and made grimaces during this access of gayety; as to the one who had caused it, he did not for a moment suspect that they were laughing at him, and he looked through the two doors saying, —

"What is it that they see? — I see nothing to laugh at, everything goes by so quickly. Bichat wrote to me, 'You will tell me all that you have noticed on the way,' but, jingo, how can one notice anything when one is on the wing, like a bird."

Frederic, who had examined the man with the merino hat from head to foot, said under his breath, —

"Well, everything corresponds to the hat, the mantle, the trousers, the whole get-up in fact. Oh, I really must know who this gentleman is."

After a moment M. Frederic leaned towards M. Richard's neighbor, and said to him, —

"Sir, you are not perhaps aware that an accident has happened to you on the way, and that you have lost something."

"Me?" answered the person addressed, "I have lost something, — but at any rate it is neither my watch nor my handkerchief, for I don't possess either the one or the other and I never have."

Everybody looked at him, and M. Richard drew away from his neighbor, murmuring, —

"He hasn't a handkerchief, how does he manage then when he sneezes, it must be very unpleasant."

"Monsieur," resumed Frederic, with great coolness, "I didn't wish to speak to you about those things and I didn't know, either, that you would profess such high disdain for watches and handkerchiefs."

"I don't despise them for an instant," answered the traveller, smiling, "but watches cost too much for my purse."

M. Richard drew still nearer towards Frederic, and Madame Saint-Godibert said between her teeth, —

"Why isn't a man like that in the wagon?"

The perfumed gentleman drew out his handkerchief, which was redolent of patchouli, and made a great show of using it, in order, no doubt, to inform the company that he did not profess the same principles as the badly dressed individual; and M. Saint-Godibert said, shaking his head with a knowing look, —

"Oh, I am much vexed that my brother the literary man is not with us, he is so very observing, and he likes to see things that are a little out of the way; he has a devil of a mind, has Mondigo."

"That's as it may be," murmured M. Richard.

Frederic again addressed the man in the corner.

"Monsieur, the loss which you have sustained is not considerable, however, it will perhaps embarrass you, you have one trouser strap missing — on your left foot."

The man with the Cossack's face slapped himself on the left thigh, and answered, laughing, —

"My trouser strap, why I haven't had one for six months on the left foot. I am always going to put one on it, but if you ask for a bit of leather they want to sell you two rounds, and I said, bah, it's not worth the trouble, I'll wear out the trousers like this."

"It seems to me," murmured M. Richard, very seriously, "that the trousers deserve that he should spend so much upon them."

"Do you like them? Hum, they are almost worn out, however, but I was obliged to wear them because I have not any others."

"I am afraid that he professes the same disregard for shirts that he does for handkerchiefs," said Richard to his friend.

A series of exclamations from the old gentleman with the diamonds alarmed Madame Saint-Godibert, who exclaimed, —

"What is the matter, has some accident happened to the engine?"

"No, no, aunt, don't be afraid, you see we are still moving. The old gentleman in the corner over there seems to be suffering."

"That's true," said M. Saint-Godibert, casting a respectful glance on the old gentleman, "monsieur does seem uncomfortable, travelling is very tiresome when one is unwell."

"But the oscillation of the carriage is very slight," murmured the perfumed gentleman, "one might play at dominoes here."

And as though delighted at what he had said, the young man looked at everybody, smiling, and did not remark that his travelling companion's right hand, and the big, dark young man's left hand, had both disappeared, probably to meet where they would be sheltered from indiscreet looks.

"Happily," resumed M. Saint-Godibert, "we are only four on this side, which enables us to be more comfortable; I am delighted on account of that old gentleman, who is indisposed and who appears to be a person of consideration."

"How can you tell that, uncle," answered Frederic in a whisper, "do you think that his old leather cushion gives him the air of sitting on a throne?"

At this M. Saint-Godibert knit his brows and growled, —

"You are always the same, nephew, always mocking, heedless, and talking at cross purposes."

"Yes," said the great lady, angrily, "yes, and forgetful of the respect which you owe to the relations who have brought you up at their expense, and as well as their own son. This is almost

always the recompense which one earns by doing good."

"Oh, come, my dear aunt, are you going to be angry because of a joke, and you, Julien, intercede for me, tell your mother that I am not ungrateful; a proof of which is that I parade everywhere the generosity, the benevolence, the greatness of soul of my dear relations."

"My mother does not wish you to do so," answered young Julien, hastening to interrupt his cousin, who, while he enumerated the numerous qualities of his uncle and his aunt, had still the air of mocking at them.

For some little time they journeyed in silence, but M. Frederic and his neighbor seemed to understand each other very well without speaking. Presently, however, the big young man, who was not fond of silence, addressed himself anew to the man with the Cossack's face.

"Monsieur, you will perhaps think me very curious, and my question will very likely seem indiscreet to you, but I cannot refrain from putting it, you have a hat which evokes my admiration, I have never seen one like it, would you kindly inform me where one can obtain hats like those?"

"Are you asking about my hat? Why, my faith, it's one that I made myself from a piece of merino, the remains of one of my late wife's dresses from which I had already made two waistcoats."

"You made two waistcoats from your late wife's —"

"Yes, monsieur, from her dress. I made that myself on my old felt shape — frankly, it's rather flat."

"Oh, you call that a flat hat, it's very graceful, I would give something to have a low-crowned hat like that, it's infinitely preferable. You must needs be a hatter, monsieur, or you would not have been so successful in making that one."

"Me, not at all, I'm a button-maker."

"Button-maker, what kind of a trade is that?"

"I make bone buttons."

"Ah, you make buttons, very good; but it seems to me that you don't work for yourself, for there are a good many lacking on your overcoat."

"Oh, you know the proverb, shoemakers are always the worst shod; for the matter of that, that is a worse-paid trade than mine, but if I made them with shanks I should earn more at it."

"Oh, you make buttons without shanks."

"I have already tried several trades, I have been a trousers-maker for a long time, I have been an excise man, a wine-vault inspector, a heap of things; but I've had no luck."

"It's because you haven't found your true vocation, I assure you, monsieur, that you ought to have been a hatter."

"Do you think so? Faith, I'm going to Paris, I don't know what to do, but Bichat wrote to me

'Come immediately, I have something good to offer you; come by railway, I will pay for your journey.' Then, you may well imagine, I started straight away."

"Is Bichat related to you?"

"He's my friend, my comrade; when my late wife died I took six pairs of stockings out of her chest and made Bichat a present of them."

"You had a good many things belonging to your late wife. Her stockings were no doubt too small for you, and your friend Bichat has a neat foot."

"Oh, pooh! he's an ox; but my late wife was twice as big as madame there, so you may judge of her size."

And the dirty individual indicated Madame Saint-Godibert, who turned her head angrily and muttered,—

"I don't understand what pleasure my nephew can find in talking with that person!"

But during the preceding conversation the pretty brunette and Frederic's young neighbor had from time to time burst into shouts of laughter, which proved that they did not share the opinion of Madame Saint-Godibert; and the big brown young man, who seemed to feel very little uneasiness at the vexation of his uncle and aunt, continued his conversation with the button-maker.

"It appears, monsieur, from what you say, that your wife was very handsome?"

"Oh, she was as big as a hogshead, a perfect tower. I made this little cape out of one of her spencers; as to her stockings, I gave those to Bichat because I never wear any."

M. Richard endeavored to withdraw still further from the button-maker, the pretty brunette laughed heartily under cover of her handkerchief, and Frederic resumed,—

"Oh, you don't wear stockings; you prefer socks, I suppose?"

"No, monsieur, nothing at all, what use is it to have all that in one's boots?"

"I see, you are like the Scotch who go with their legs nude."

"And then all those things cost money. Oh, if they had not said that there was no more room in the wagons you may well believe I shouldn't have come in here — but it is perhaps a trick of railway servants to make people take the dearest places."

"The management is very culpable," said M. Saint-Godibert, wrinkling his little nose. "It exposes people of means to all sorts of unpleasantness. I shall lay a complaint about it myself."

"Why, good heavens, my dear uncle, what can you do about it; you can't go in an omnibus, if you have those ideas."

Here the conversation was interrupted by a violent concussion, felt by everyone in the carriage, which soon came to a stop. Terror was depicted on the faces of all these good people. Madame

Saint-Godibert and her husband uttered affrighted exclamations, the pretty woman turned pale and trembled, and her gentleman exclaimed,—

"Something has happened to the train, we shall all be killed."

The old gentleman groaned and tried to rise from his cushion, Frederic endeavored to reassure his fair neighbor, and forgot himself so much as to pass his arm behind her so as to clasp her round the waist; but the lady's companion was then too frightened to pay any attention to that. Meanwhile the button-maker had put his head out of the window, and now drew it in again, saying,—

"Nothing at all is the matter, it was a little earth that had slipped on to the rails and they hadn't had time to signal. But the track is clear now, and we shall roll along smoothly."

In fact, in a few minutes the train started, and serenity adorned the faces of all.

"Never mind," said M. Saint-Godibert, "but if that had happened in a tonnelle — turnell, in a subterranean cutting, in short, it would have been much more alarming, and perhaps very dangerous."

"I shan't go to Rouen — that's decided," cried Madame Saint-Godibert.

"But, aunt, there's no danger, and you may understand that a landslide is not to be feared in a tunnel, since there's nothing but masonry on all sides."

"It's all the same, nephew, I shall not go to Rouen until all the tunnels are open to the sky."

"I would give a hundred sous for a pinch of snuff," said M. Saint-Godibert, "and I have left mine at home."

The gentleman with the curly hair drew a snuff-box from his pocket, and hastily opened it to present it to the company, saying,—

"Here is some snuff—here you are; I take it very seldom, but sometimes on a journey it is very refreshing."

M. Saint Godibert, his wife, and the three young men accepted a pinch from the box he offered them, and the button-maker, wishing to do the same, leaned over and stretched out his hand to take a pinch, when the pock-marked young man pushed his hand away rudely, saying,—

"Oh, no, monsieur, not so, if you please; you cannot have a pinch, that is forbidden you."

"And why, may I ask you!" cried the man with the plaited hat, looking at his neighbor in surprise. "Since monsieur offers snuff to everybody, why should I not have some, like the others?"

"Why shouldn't you have some?—well, because you haven't a handkerchief, monsieur, and it would be very awkward indeed were you to sneeze as one does on taking a pinch of snuff."

"What are you saying; I can sneeze if I wish, it doesn't matter to you."

"On the contrary, it matters a good deal."

"I tell you, I shall take a pinch and you can't prevent my doing so."

The discussion became animated. The curly-haired gentleman still held his snuff-box open, as if he did not know what he was doing; but his pretty partner immediately found a way to terminate the dispute; by a turn of the hand she knocked over the box and its contents.

"That settles the question!" cried Frederic.

"O Irma!" ejaculated the perfumed gentleman, stooping to look for his snuff-box, "you've made me spill some delicious snuff, some pure Robillard."

"I did it on purpose," said the charming brunette to Frederic, who took advantage of her companion's position to answer,—

"You have so much presence of mind, you are so enchanting! Will you not allow me to see you again. You are one of those persons whom to meet is a happiness, which, if one should not see you again, will become eternal regret."

"Really!"

"It's singular I can't find it," muttered the owner of the snuff-box, who was almost on all-fours at the bottom of the carriage, "Excuse me, gentlemen, would you mind moving your feet?"

"He won't find it until I choose that he shall," said Mademoiselle Irma, smiling at Frederic, "I took care to put my foot over it."

"Answer me, please; where can I see you in Paris? — may I call at your house?"

"That is impossible, I live with him."

"Irma, my dearest, move your foot a little that I may look under your dress."

"It's useless, monsieur, the box did not roll this way."

"Then make an appointment with me, ah, I entreat you, don't refuse me."

"Well, then, tomorrow at noon, at the Cité Bergere."

"Tomorrow at midday, how charming of you.'

"Oh, here it is; it had rolled over here, I have it!"

And the gentleman rose and returned to his seat, exclaiming, —

"I've got my box; here it is, but there's hardly a pinch of snuff left in it."

"Then, my dear, perhaps you'll keep still for a little while now."

"Yes, my dear Irma."

And while all this was taking place the button-maker was huddled in his corner, looking rather put out and muttering,—

"It's a great pity that he dropped the snuff-box, if he hadn't they should have seen something. To prevent me from taking a pinch was a little severe. What does it matter to him if I haven't a handkerchief? Are we no longer free? Is it down on the map that each Frenchman must

have a handkerchief? — that would be mighty embarrassing for a good many people. It's quite likely my gentleman hasn't paid for the one he has himself."

The train stopped in the station at Corbeil, and presently the carriage door opened and a young girl appeared on the step; she looked timidly to the right and left, and said,—

"But I do not see a place here."

One of the guards came and assisted the new comer into the carriage, saying, —

"Pardon me, mademoiselle; on this side there are only four, there's a place for one there — it holds five, as you may see."

Young Julien drew nearer to his father, but the old man remained stationary on his green cushion, with an air of defying anybody to make him budge, so it was necessary for Rose-Marie to content herself with the small space which the young man had made for her,—for it was Jerome's daughter, who had quitted the Fontainebleau coach, and hurried to the station that she might have a seat in the first train leaving for Paris.

A new arrival always causes some little stir of curiosity in a public carriage. When the person who is going to make the journey with us proves to be a young and pretty woman, then curiosity is merged on the one hand in interest, on the other in watchfulness or jealousy. Rose-Marie's presence would necessarily make a sensation in a

small place when men were in the majority. The young girl was so good-looking that one must notice her beauty; then her respectable, honest, and modest appearance predisposed one in her favor, for these qualities are always pleasing, and even those who do not possess them cannot help admiring them.

Young Saint-Godibert, without appearing to glance her way, had discerned at once what a charming neighbor chance had sent him, and while squeezing his father that she might have more room, he was not at all displeased at being touched and pressed by her.

M. Richard cast admiring glances at the young girl, he evidently wished to fascinate her, but only succeeded in making her lower her eyes.

Frederic, although greatly occupied with his neighbor, could not hide his admiration for Rose-Marie, and looked much less often to his left; and the perfumed gentleman murmured between his teeth,—

"This is a very pretty girl!"

M. Saint-Godibert answered by an affirmative sign, and even the gentleman who was guiltless of socks and pocket-handkerchiefs rolled his eyes as he looked at the young girl, as if he would fain give them brilliancy, and readjusted his little cape on his shoulders.

As to the women they are very rarely pleased when anybody comes who can dispute with them

and carry off from them the palm for beauty. The fat lady with the face of a Bedouin should never have had any pretensions; but one rarely judges one's self with impartiality. Madame Saint-Godibert, who believed herself a very handsome woman, measured the young person from head to foot, and drew herself up with a satisfied air which said,—

"She cannot approach me!"

In fact, there was no comparison between the two.

The lively Irma began by giving a severe kick to her companion to teach him not to speak aloud his reflections upon feminine travellers, then she glanced spitefully at the young girl, and likewise at Frederic, and every time the young man looked at Rose-Marie she struck him in the side with her elbow.

She who caused all this movement and set all these imaginations to work, was far from perceiving that she had done so; intimidated at finding herself shut in with so many people, and above all with persons who appeared to belong to the fashionable world, she dared not look either before or around her and sat motionless in her place, trying to take up as little room as possible so as not to incommode her neighbors, and above all Julien, who said to her in a honeyed voice from time to time,—

"Come nearer, mademoiselle, do not be afraid, I have more than sufficient room."

At length the cross old gentleman of the leather cushions, conscious of the young girl's fear of approaching too near him, turned towards her, without making a grimace, and muttered to himself, —

"Oh, hang it! If I were not so ill I would make room for you, formerly I would have gone on my knees to such as you."

"The little one who has just come in is exceedingly handsome," said M. Richard, indicating her with his eye to his friend Frederic, "quite different to the lady on your left."

"Yes," answered the big, dark young man, "that young girl is ravishing, but that does not prevent my neighbor on the left from being very pleasing and very alluring."

"Alluring! possibly so, but one finds a hundred of her kind to one like the other. Your Cousin Julien is not displeased at having her next him."

"Julien! Oh, does he think about women? He is afraid of vexing his father and mother."

"You only think that because he has such a wheedling look; but he's a jolly fellow who does things on the sly."

"On my faith, if he plays tricks it astonishes me very much."

"You are too absorbed by your neighbor on the left, Julien dare not leave his parents; but I am as free as air, and should be able to make acquaintance with that little treasure there."

"Really! Ah, Richard, you are a sad rogue! She is certainly a very pretty young girl, what eyes, what beautiful eyelashes, and the outlines of her face are so fine—"

A blow from his neighbor's elbow interrupted M. Frederic's enumeration of Rose-Marie's charms, he bit his lips, smiled, and threw his glances elsewhere.

Suddenly the man of the merino hat leaned towards Rose-Marie, exclaiming,—

"Mademoiselle, it seems to me you are not very comfortable; there are so many fat people on your bench — take my place. In a corner you will be less incommoded, and it's all the same to me, besides, I am comfortable anywhere."

The button-maker had already risen to change his place, but the young girl answered with a sweet smile,—

"I thank you, monsieur, but I don't wish to disturb anyone; besides, I am very comfortable here."

"But it won't disturb me, come, take my place without any fuss."

"You are too good, monsieur, but I am very well here, I thank you."

The button-maker dropped into his corner, saying,—

"As you please — but I made the offer with a good heart, because one doesn't need to carry a handkerchief in his pocket to be polished."

These words were accompanied by an angry glance at M. Richard, who contented himself by laughing, and saying in a whisper,—

"Gallantry shelters itself in strange places!"

After this the journey was made in silence. Since the arrival of the tenth person the aspect of the interior of the carriage had changed. The women were ill-humored; the men seemed very much preoccupied, and the brilliant Frederic had lost his tongue, and was wholly engaged in admiring the one who was opposite and being agreeable to the one at his side.

And, as a journey is quickly made on the railroad even when one does not talk, the travellers soon perceived with surprise that their carriage had stopped; they had arrived at their destination, the station which is at the nine boulevards, near the Jardin des Plantes.

"Why, are we here so soon?" said the button-maker, rushing towards the door. "We have come at a pretty pace, in justice to the railroads I must say that; and we were not jolted at all. We're near the natural history gardens, and before going to see Bichat I must go and look at the bears."

The Saint-Godibert couple had got into a cab. Young Julien more than once turned his head to look at the pretty person who had been seated next him, but his father and mother called him; he got into the cab with an air of vexation at being unable to follow his own will.

As to Frederic he had already said good-by to his uncle and aunt, and, after glancing smilingly at Rose-Marie, and making a sign to his friend Richard, he stepped briskly after the curled gentleman who departed by way of the Pont d'Austerlitz, giving his arm to the seductive Irma; and the latter, while holding up her dress so as to show her very pretty ankles, often turned her head backwards to see if Frederic were following, and bestowed looks upon him which said very plainly,—

"If you do not come to my side, and if you remain near that young girl who was with us in the railway carriage, you will be likely to wait vainly for me to-morrow in the Cité de Bergere."

You see the ladies' eyes are even quicker at making signs than are the stenographers; and no matter how dextrous and skilful the latter may be, I defy them to follow the language of certain eyes at certain moments.

CHAPTER X

Rose-Marie in Paris

At length all the travellers had left the different carriages of the train except the old gentleman of the green cushions, who could not easily rise without assistance, and who was waiting until his servant, who had travelled in the third-class carriages, could proffer his arm.

The bewildered Rose-Marie found herself in a vast station, where the arrival and departure of the trains produced a good deal of noise, and a constant movement and confusion which was inconceivably overwhelming to persons who were not used to travelling, especially on the railway. The little country girl was surrounded by travellers who stopped to greet other travellers, who talked with their acquaintances, and who called porters and gave them orders; many of these travellers were old friends who had not seen each other for a long time, although they lived in Paris, but they were in different parts of the city and they met at the station because all the neighborhoods came together there, people from the Marais, the Faubourg Saint-Germain, and the Chaussée d'Antin are there mingled, and you may often meet there

persons for whom you have sought in vain for several years, in the streets or in the promenades of the city.

Rose-Marie first inquired about her trunk, and was told that she could have it whenever she pleased; but the young girl thought that it would be very inconvenient to go looking for her uncle's dwelling followed by a porter bearing her trunk; and then it seemed to her that to present herself immediately with her baggage at the houses of relations whom she did not know was as though she said to them, "I have come to install myself with you, and you must keep me whether you wish to or not."

Rose-Marie, who did not entirely share her father's opinion, and was not at all persuaded that her uncle would accord her the welcome that Jerome hoped for her, had too much pride of character to thrust herself into the houses of persons who did not receive her with pleasure. The young girl had already said to herself that she would much rather work, place herself in some shop and utilize her little talent in plain needlework and embroidery than to live with relations on whom she would be a charge. The result of all these reflections was that she inquired whether she might leave her trunk at the railway office; on receiving an affirmative answer she gave her name, that no one might take away her trunk except they were sent by her, then she set out for

her Uncle Nicolas Gogo's dwelling, saying to herself, —

"If by chance I should meet M. Leopold he will be greatly surprised to see me in Paris; it will be all the same to him, no doubt. Oh, I shall speak to him, but I shall only beg him to tell me what he has done with my portrait, for, of course, when one no longer thinks of anybody it is very probable that they do not keep her portrait."

While the pretty traveller came and went in the station, losing herself in the halls and the galleries, there was one young man who did not lose sight of her, and who, without seeming to do so, followed her from afar and watched all her movements.

You already know that this was the very ugly young man, named Richard. This gentleman, who never charmed one at first sight, and often displeased at second, still gave himself the pretension of succeeding with women who pleased him. If he had had wit and amiability that might still have been conceivable, but, without being entirely stupid, M. Richard was not a wit, for one should not give that name to the habit of mocking and turning into ridicule everything done by anybody else. His only advantage was in having a good memory, and as he had read a good deal this availed him greatly in conversation, in which he tried to give himself the appearance of a very

well-read man; but he was not amiable, because he was envious, and his spite at being ugly, and having no fortune continually rankled in his mind, and showed itself in his speech. What then were the means that he employed to charm?—obstinacy, perseverance and calumny. He wearied a woman with his homage and his declarations, he threw himself incessantly in her way, and he did his best to compromise her. He succeeded in this sometimes, and would not consent to discontinue his pursuit until he had attained his object.

And there are some women weak enough to yield to such men! But, let us hasten to add, there are also a great many more of them who make such an one repent his insults, and libertines of M. Richard's stamp often receive punishment about which they are careful not to boast.

Rose-Marie stopped in the great courtyard which gave on the waterside, and drew from her pocket the paper upon which she had written the addresses of her father's two brothers. Nicolas Gogo lived on the Rue Saint-Lazare, it was there, then, that she must go first; she went up to a cabman and asked him what direction she should take to get to the Rue Saint-Lazare.

"Go over the Pont d'Austerlitz that you see down there, then follow the boulevard right straight before you, pass the Porte Saint-Martin, the Porte Saint-Denis and then, when you come to the Rue Mont-Blanc, take that, and at the end of it is the

Rue Saint-Lazare ; but it's a long way, mamzelle, and you would do well to take a carriage ; above all, if you do not know Paris."

But the young girl was not tired and greatly preferred to walk. It was not late, for she had reached Paris at four o'clock, the weather was superb, and she was not displeased to become a little acquainted with that city which she had heard spoken of so much, and which they say has not its equal in the universe.

Perhaps there was still another reason which made Rose-Marie prefer to go on foot ; do I need to tell you what that was ? No, you can divine what was passing in this young girl's heart. She did not yet know that Paris is an immense and very populous city, the streets of which are incessantly encumbered by a crowd who come and go, run, hasten, put themselves in motion, push and press, and in which one may walk for a long time without meeting persons whom they know.

M. Richard had seen the young girl draw a paper from her pocket, consult it, and speak to a cabman. He easily understood that she was asking for directions, and had he been nearer to her he would have hastened to offer his services. After thanking the coachman the young traveller started on her walk, M. Richard following, —

" I must wait for an occasion to address her, it is probable that one will not be long in presenting itself."

Rose-Marie crossed the Pont d'Austerlitz, then she followed the boulevard alongside the canal; from time to time she looked around her curiously, but she still saw nothing which fixed her attention, the Boulevard Bourdon is little frequented; on one side the public granaries, then the old Quartier de l'Arsenal, with its old library, on the other a great ditch full of water, these are all which this promenade offers to the notice of pedestrians, who, on this account, very likely, do not frequent it in crowds, and the pretty Avon girl, judging Paris by what she had already seen of it, said to herself, while walking along,—

"Well, it's not so very fine as all that, I don't meet so many people, and the shops are very few, or so it seems, and they told me that Paris was so gay, so noisy, so populous. I don't find it so at all, and it seems to me that one might very well happen to see in the streets—there, certainly if M. Leopold passes along here I shall see him immediately."

But Rose-Marie did not notice the gentleman who was walking but two paces from her, and who seemed to moderate or hasten his steps according as she pressed her own. In truth, M. Richard still remained at a respectful distance, often, even, he stayed behind, for then he could examine the young girl's figure more freely, notice her feet, her carriage, her shape; the result of this examination was all to the advantage of the charming

Rose, and only confirmed the ugly young man in his designs.

Arrived at the Place de la Bastille, Jerome's daughter began to find Paris gayer, then only was it that the great city appeared to her, with its inhabitants, its merchants, its promenaders, its carriages, its shops, its noise, its movement, its life, in short, — she paused, undecided, she looked around her, she admired the beautiful column and the long avenue which lay before her, then she recalled all that someone had told her about this beautiful promenade of Paris, called the boulevards, and she said to herself,—

"Oh, here they are, I am glad of that, here's everything just as he depicted it to me, the cabman told me that this was my way; come, how many people there are here; ah, if he should pass, he will not see me, perhaps." Rose crossed the Place and continued down the Boulevard Beaumarchais, but now she walked with less certainty; all these people passing intimidated her, the noise of the carriages deafened her, the shouts of the street vendors astonished her, and the looks that were cast on her often made the color fly to her face. It is only at Paris that there are men who have a singular manner of looking at a pretty person, and who, to make her understand that they find her to their taste, think of nothing better than to make indecent gestures, or to address her in foul terms.

Already Rose-Marie had received several of these gross compliments, launched at her, point blank, by some men who were passing near her. Far from feeling flattered she felt confused, and regretted that her hat did not hide her still further from their looks. She endeavored to walk more quickly, but for one who is not accustomed to traverse the streets of a great city it is often difficult to advance in the midst of all those people who come and go incessantly around you. The farther the young girl went, the greater the crowd she met upon her way. She had now reached the Boulevard du Temple, where the crowd was still thicker, Rose stopped, frightened, and said to herself,—

"Mercy, if this continues I cannot go any farther just now, and I thought it would be so easy to meet him; ah, how mistaken I was, so many people frighten one."

However, despite her fright, the charming Rose paused before a little girl, who was not yet five years old, and who showed her a little flat basket which was attached before her, saying,—

"Mamzelle, won't you please buy some lucifer matches of me, I am selling them for mamma; there are six of us children, mamma is ill, she has not worked for a long time, and there is no bread in the house."

"Poor child," cried Rose, looking eagerly for her purse, "so young and already acquainted with

poverty, oh, how pleased I am that my father gave me some money." And the young girl immediately took two five-franc pieces from her purse and put them in the little match-seller's hands, saying to her,—

"Here, my poor little girl, go and take that to your mother and for some time at least you will be safe from want."

The child looked in surprise at the two pieces of one hundred sous which lay in her hand, then, without even thanking the one who had so generously and sympathetically given them to her, she departed, running and shouting with joy, and dropping some of her packets of matches on the boulevard as she went. But Rose was pleased with the little girl's joy, she thought that she was only in such a hurry to depart because she wished to run more quickly to her mother with the money which had been given to her, and Jerome's daughter regretted that she had not given her more. However, she had only twelve francs remaining in her purse, but she hoped to have no need of money in Paris, nor did she realize what the need of it might mean.

Rose was extremely anxious to know if she was approaching her uncle's dwelling, for it seemed to her that she had already walked a very long way. She stopped and looked timorously around her, deciding to ask her way from a passer-by; at this moment M. Richard, who judged the occasion

favorable, came up to the young girl, bowed, and said to her,—

"You seem to be looking for your way, mademoiselle, perhaps you don't know Paris very well, for, if I am not mistaken, we travelled together on the railway; you came into the carriage at Corbeil, did you not?"

Rose-Marie looked at the gentleman who spoke to her and recognized him, for he had a face that was very recognizable, and answered him, with an inclination of the head,—

"It's true, monsieur, I came by the railway, I came from Fontainebleau, farther than that even, for I am from the village of Avon, and I came to Paris to be with my uncles. I have their address, but I don't know how to find their street. I am going first to the Rue Saint-Lazare, is it far from here, monsieur?"

"Yes, mademoiselle, but I am going just that way, if you will allow me, I shall take much pleasure in being your guide."

Rose-Marie did not feel great confidence in the gentleman who had made her this offer; M. Richard's face did not please her, not so much because it was ugly as because of its bold expression, however, in broad daylight and in the midst of so many people, Rose did not imagine that there was the least danger, so she answered, lowering her eyes,—

"You are very kind, monsieur."

M. Richard, highly gratified by her consent, began to walk beside the young traveller, and said to himself,—

"Go slowly, do not frighten her, in the first place, this is not a Parisian grisette. Presently I will offer her an arm, which she will be very flattered to accept"; then M. Richard resumed the conversation, in which he promised to dazzle the provincial by his knowledge and his sallies.

"Have you ever been to Paris before, mademoiselle?"

"No, monsieur, never."

"I am only too delighted to be your cicerone, we are on the boulevards, it is the promenade of Paris which is unrivalled in any other city in Europe. It begins at that column which you saw just now, and ends at the Place de la Madeleine, which you shall see later on. This long series of boulevards is the admiration of strangers and the delight of the inhabitants of this capital, there are, besides, the nine boulevards which curve around the city, but they are still deserted, and when one quotes the promenade of the boulevards of Paris it has nothing to do with those. All this space, which today is so filled with people, so brilliant, so commercially busy, was, however, in its origin, nothing but ditches excavated for the defence of Paris against the attacks of the English. In 1536 they made some trenches, and one was excavated from the Porte Saint-Honoré up to the Porte

Saint-Antoine. These fortifications happily fell into disuse, little by little the ditches were filled in, and towards the year 1671 they commenced this promenade and planted some trees there. Today there is nothing about the boulevards of Paris which recalls these ditches, is there, mademoiselle?"

Rose-Marie did not listen to M. Richard, she saw a young man passing with a figure like Leopold's, she felt her heart beat violently, and even after she was certain it was not he of whom she was thinking, her eyes followed for a long time the person who recalled him.

M. Richard received no answer to his question, and said to himself,—

"I am too learned for this young girl, I am speaking of things which she does not understand, I must adapt myself to the level of her comprehension." The ugly young man coughed, and thrust down his head to look at Rose-Marie.

"I will not speak of the Boulevard Bourdon, which you passed on leaving the Pont d'Austerlitz, it is so sad, so lonely, that I do not count it; the Boulevard Beaumarchais, which you traversed first, is not yet very lively; bordered on one side by a low street with woodyards, on the other it has not yet anything better than shops. Its only advantage for the moment consists in the groups of old trees which shade the stone benches placed in the crosswalks; there, in the evening,

the couples who seek solitude betake themselves, and, certainly, when one is walking with a pretty woman solitude is very desirable. Ha, ha."

M. Richard laughed all alone, Rose-Marie contented herself with turning her head and looking at an organ grinder and a woman who was singing and accompanying herself on the violin.

The gentleman, perceiving that what he called a sally produced no effect, and that his laughter was not communicative, hastened to resume his speech,—

"You saw later, mademoiselle, the Boulevard des Filles-du-Calvaire, in the neighborhood of the Marais, a quiet locality where one can walk without pretension, without making a grand toilet. The inhabitants of the Marais go out to take the air, the old gentleman of means supported on his housekeeper's arm, the respectable shopkeeper of the Rue du Pas-de-la-Mule goes on the boulevard to play with his children; oh, it is all very old-fashioned. If one does not sometimes meet pretty grisettes it is because they do not go there, for the rest, I defy anyone to see there a more charming figure than your own. Oh, if she existed I should know her; I know all the pretty kittens in Paris, I dare flatter myself as to that."

Rose-Marie stopped before a little boy whose clothing barely covered him, and who presented a little box filled with packets of toothpicks, as he said to her in a low voice,—

"Buy some toothpicks of me, mademoiselle, I have not eaten anything for two days; my father is in the hospital, he was injured by falling off a building, and I am left all alone to take care of my little sister."

The young girl put a hundred sou piece in the little boy's hand, saying,—

"Come, I did well not to give it all to the little girl, for I can at least help this one also."

The little merchant departed, thanking Rose, and M. Richard approached the latter, saying to her,—

"Mademoiselle, I see that you are very charitable, and I compliment you on that fact, but, believe me, you must be cautious with these little wretches, who, under the pretext of selling you the most trifling objects, try to move your heart by telling you of chimerical troubles, misfortunes which they have invented; for example, that little scamp to whom you have just given five francs has gone immediately to the neighboring pastry-cook's and is going to stuff himself with cakes and sweetmeats, and then he will gamble with boys of his kind with what remains of the money, and that is what your charity will amount to."

Rose looked at M. Richard incredulously, and murmured,—

"Oh, monsieur, what a thought, one must repulse all the unfortunate then and never believe in their prayers, in their tears even."

"That would be the only way to prevent one's self from being duped."

"I would much rather be duped sometimes than insensible to the prayers of those who really suffer."

"You are right there, mademoiselle, in fact, with eyes like yours it would be very wrong to show one's self insensible and —"

"This boulevard where we now are, monsieur, what is the name of this?"

"The Boulevard du Temple, mademoiselle. Oh, this merits your attention, above all if you love popular gayety, spectacles in full swing; this boulevard holds a perpetual fair, it has not its like among all the others, it has its arcade, its public garden, the only one, alas, which now remains of its kind in Paris, where the gardens give place to cobble stones.

"Will you not stop for an instant, mademoiselle, and look in front of you, on the further side, I assure you that it is curious. First of all an immense café with billiard-rooms on every story, soon they will place them on the roofs, and the ball, struck too forcibly, will jump into a chimney pot and go down to the billiard-room on the first floor, where it will bring about a cannon. After this café, a restaurant, where they celebrate grand weddings; you cannot pass by this restaurant any Sunday evening without seeing the drawing-rooms lighted, without hearing the sound of music, with-

out perceiving through the windows a more or less elegant gathering of people who skip, who balance, who flutter and give themselves up to all the delight of the pastourelle and the cat's tail. Is it a wedding? There are some Sundays when there are as many as four parties in the drawing-rooms of the restaurant, and it is not rare then that people invited to a ball commit some mistake and go to the wrong wedding. You believe you are about to meet the person with whom the lawyer of your acquaintance is about to marry, and you bow to the grocer's bride and say to her,—

"'Madame, I do not doubt that henceforth your husband will win all his cases.'

"And the bride answers you, curtseying,—

"'We will try to please all our customers.'

"You think this is very prettily put and you leave, fully persuaded that the lady is full of wit until the sight of her husband shows you your mistake.

"After this restaurant comes another café, particularly frequented by the plebeians, then another café for the shopkeeping class, then a curious spectacle, such as a dwarf or a giant, or a woman as shaggy as a bear, or some hideous animals, or no matter what, but always something curious; then at the gate, the farce, the ravishing farce which gave our fathers pleasure, which gives us pleasure and which will give our children pleasure. It is no longer the celebrated Bobèche, the face-

tious Galimafré, but other artists have replaced them. In Paris, clowns and merry-andrews are not rare, and a farce will never die. Following this spectacle in the open air comes another café, then the theatre, the Cirque Olympique; then another café followed by another theatre, that of the Folies-Dramatiques; after that, for variety, you find a café and then a theatre, the Gaîté; then another show, the Funambules; then still another, the Délassements; then a little show entitled Lazary, — and all this flanked by other cafés, other curiosities, and a crowd of pastrycooks. You see, mademoiselle, that I was right in telling you that this boulevard has not its like anywhere."

Rose-Marie, who had been very willing to stop for a moment to look at the places which this gentleman had shown her, resumed her walk, saying,—

"But, monsieur, why the farther I go on these boulevards do I meet more and more people?"

"Oh, mademoiselle, that is because you are approaching the centre of Paris, the neighborhood of the shops, the commercial part of the city. Here we are on the Boulevard Saint-Martin. This is the Château-d'Eau surrounded by foot-soldiers, children's nurses, street urchins, and people who are walking alone and awaiting someone; the dandies and foppish fellows are still rare about here, you meet few varnished boots and yellow gloves, but, instead, you meet many actresses of

the boulevards, not many carriages or cavaliers on dashing horses, but many cabs containing noblemen and little citizenesses shut in by spring blinds, ha, ha!"

"Are we still far from the Rue Saint-Lazare, monsieur?"

"Oh, certainly, mademoiselle, you may see before you get there nearly all the boulevards; but if you are tired I can offer you a carriage. Would you like one?"

"I thank you, monsieur, I prefer to go on foot."

And the young girl redoubled her speed, for M. Richard's conversation was not interesting to her, she did not wish to learn Paris from this unknown man. She hoped from the bottom of her soul that the young painter would do himself the pleasure of showing her all that was curious in the capital, but the farther she went in this immense city the farther her hope receded.

M. Richard was almost obliged to run in order to keep up with the young girl; at last he was again beside her, and said to her,—

"Here is the Porte Saint-Martin, down there is the Porte Saint-Denis, the populous shopkeeping district. But you are walking very fast, mademoiselle."

"Yes, because I am in haste to reach my destination, monsieur."

"This is the Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle, the

children's nurses, the workmen, the badly dressed people are rarer here, elegant ladies appear, soon they will be in the majority, we are approaching a fine neighborhood. On the Boulevard Poissonnière, which we are about to take, where everything is in good style, the ladies' outfitters have ravishing shops, the shirt makers, the modistes and the chocolate shops are all in the best taste; by the way if I should dare to offer you a little cake — something in fact — "

"I thank you, monsieur, I am not hungry, I do not wish to take anything."

"She does not wish to take anything," said Richard to himself, "I was very right, this is not a Parisian grisette, but a very agreeable acquaintance."

Rose-Marie still walked along very quickly; M. Richard was out of breath but he dared not allow it to appear. They were on the Boulevard Montmartre, and the gentleman exclaimed,—

"Mademoiselle, you are now in the centre, in the good neighborhood, see this wide, straight, spacious street, where some of the houses have gilded railings; this is the Rue Neuve-Vivienne, see these tilburys, these landaus, these caracolling horses and these cafés, how rich, how magnificent they are, oh, we are a good way from the Marais now, and then the women, how coquettishly they are dressed, what beautiful toilets; I am sure that you are lost in admiration of all that you see."

"And the Rue Saint-Lazare, monsieur, is it quite at the other end of Paris?"

"We shall soon be there, have a little patience, we are on the Boulevard des Italiens. This is the Chaussée d'Antin, this is the habitat of the stockbrokers, the ladies of the opera, the young men who have a fortune to dissipate, eccentric artists, gay women, bankers, carriage makers, pastile merchants. Oh, smell, mademoiselle, breathe a little, don't you find that the air is balmy with perfume; first of all, all these ladies who pass here are perfumed from their head to their feet. Ah, we are in the very midst of opulence and magnificence."

Rose-Marie, in place of answering, stopped before an old blind man who was seated at the foot of a tree, having his dog before him which held a little wooden bowl in his jaws; the blind man was playing a kind of bird organ, in order that he might attract the notice of the passers-by.

The young girl approached the old man; his infirmity, and the rags which covered him, wrung a sigh from the pretty Rose, and fumbling hastily in her pocket she took therefrom the last five-franc piece she had and placed it in the wooden bowl, exclaiming,—

"Poor man, at your age, blind, and perhaps without bread."

Then Rose-Marie resumed her way without listening to the benediction of the old man, and

said to the gentleman who was walking beside her,—

"It seems, monsieur, that in the neighborhood of opulence and magnificence one may also find the unfortunate."

"Oh, you are talking about that blind man," answered Richard, sneeringly, "but you don't know that that man some days makes a hundred sous, six francs, and sometimes more."

Jerome's daughter experienced a feeling of repulsion to this man who did not wish to do a charitable action, and who for fear of being duped would rather deny the unfortunate.

"But, monsieur," resumed Rose, "this man is very aged and he is deprived of sight, it seems to me that no one can doubt his misfortune."

"He is aged, yes, that proves that up to the present he has had something to live upon; blind, that's possible, but it's not proved, there are a good many Guzman d'Alfraches at Paris. Here are the Chinese baths, mademoiselle, we are almost at the Rue d'Antin, which we must take and which will lead you to the Rue Saint-Lazare. Except the Boulevard de la Madeleine you will have traversed all this promenade which has made you know Paris under different aspects, elegant, commercial, populous, and since they have flagged and asphalted the boulevards, and since they are magnificently lighted with gas, by these candelabras that you see by each side of the footway,

a short distance apart, this promenade is as agreeable at night as in the daytime, there are, however, some people who regret the obscurity and the mud — why, where is the little one gone now?"

M. Richard stopped and turned, and perceived the young woman emptying the rest of her money into the hands of a poor woman who carried an infant, held another under her arm and gave her hand to a third. This woman did not beg, but she was so pale, so ill-dressed, she looked so sadly at her little children that it was difficult not to feel moved. Rose returned towards M. Richard with tears in her eyes, and then resumed her walk, murmuring,—

"Ah, even if I should always be duped by appearances I shall never be able to see without sympathy such a sad and touching group."

"Decidedly, this young girl has nothing left," said Richard to himself, "she is sensitive to an excess, and will be a very easy conquest."

CHAPTER XI

The Two Addresses

As they neared the entrance to the Rue d'Antin, M. Richard, whose pertinacity was not at all daunted, ventured to re-approach Rose-Marie, and said to the young girl in the tone of a man who is confidently assured that he is about to confer an immense pleasure,—

"It seems to me, fair traveller, that you must be extremely tired, the distance from the Jardin des Plantes to this point is very considerable, believe me, you had far better take my arm. Pray don't stand on ceremony, and we will walk about together in order that we may become better acquainted, mademoiselle."

The young man proffered his arm, but instead of promptly accepting it, as he had felt sure the young girl would do, the latter hastily drew back and answered with modest decision,—

"I thank you, monsieur, but I prefer very much to go alone."

M. Richard knit his brows at this, and said to himself,—

"Hum! I don't understand it, this country girl is more ceremonious and dignified than I be-

lieved she would be; however, I am not going to be put out about it."

He again approached Rose, and resumed,—

"As it pleases you, mademoiselle; but I beg you to believe that I do not offer my arm to everybody. I occupy a very fine position in Paris, I am very rich, very much sought after in society, and above all very generous to women. You have a charming foot. You will make numberless conquests in Paris, as you have already made mine."

Rose-Marie listened no further, but walked still more quickly. M. Richard rejoined her, saying to himself,—

"This little one is very knowing, that is the only way of accounting for her conduct."

They were at the end of the Rue d'Antin, the young girl stopped then.

"And where is the Rue Saint-Lazare, monsieur?"

"You are there, mademoiselle, it's before you to the right and left."

"Oh, how fortunate!"

"But that is not all, mademoiselle, it is necessary to know what number you want. Don't run like that, look out for the carriages."

Rose-Marie did not listen further to M. Richard; she knew that at number sixty-two she should find her Uncle Nicolas, she had already looked at the figures on the houses and she saw

with delight that she was not far from the one she sought, she ran, she reached it, she entered a beautiful house, and, all out of breath, said to the porter, —

"Monsieur, my Uncle Nicolas, if you please, Nicolas Gogo, which story is he on?"

The porter to whom she addressed herself had formerly been a Swiss in a grand house, and still preserved his ancient decorum. Enveloped in a frock coat, which came nearly to his heels, with a helmet on his head of which the sides were level with his ears, he sat in his lodge, throned between his dog and his cat, and seemed to do you a favor in answering you. He began by impertinently weighing the young girl with his eyes, he flourished his handkerchief, passed his hand over his cat's back, and muttered, —

"Hey, what is it? What do you want?"

"I ask you to what story I must go to find my uncle, Nicolas Gogo?"

"Gogo! do I know that name? Have we anybody by that name in the house?"

"What, monsieur, you don't know my Uncle Gogo? Nevertheless, I am not mistaken, I'm very sure this is the address that was given me, 62 Rue Saint-Lazare."

"Wait, Mouton, take that, and don't dare to fight with Sarc. Come, give me your paw, give me your paw at once!"

Rose-Marie waited anxiously for the porter to

answer, but the latter was wholly engrossed with his animals and did not seem to be aware that the young girl was speaking to him. She resumed, impatiently,—

"Monsieur, answer me at once; you see I am waiting."

"What's that? What do you say? Ah, you are still there. What do you want, once more?"

"My uncle, monsieur."

"What, your uncle! how should I know your uncle? Am I obliged to know where your relations are? Here, Sarc, here, you're going at Mouton's victuals, you greedy dog; but I see you, and if I get up you'll get a few cuts from the whip!"

Jerome's daughter was still at the entrance to the porter's lodge, she held in her hand the paper on which was written her uncle's address, she again presented it to the porter and said,—

"Wait, monsieur, it was here that they told me my Uncle Gogo lived—you can see very plainly that I was not mistaken."

The would-be Swiss rose angrily, and repulsed the young girl, shouting as if he were speaking to some horses,—

"Do you know you are beginning to tire me with your Uncle Gogo. Aren't you going to leave me in peace, mademoiselle. Down, Sarc, down! How many times must I tell you that I don't know that name, that there is no one called

Gogo in the house. It seems to me I speak plain enough French!"

Rose-Marie, almost frightened by the insolent porter, retired, saying,—

"Pardon, monsieur, then our cousin must have been mistaken."

And the young girl turned into the street, very sad and very mortified, and M. Richard, who had remained at the door of the house into which he had seen her enter, hastened towards her, saying,—

"Why now, what is the matter with you, mademoiselle, you seem very sad, is your relation ill? —or have you had some bad news?"

"No, monsieur, no, it is not that. I don't understand it, my Uncle Gogo doesn't live in that house, although it was our cousin who gave me his address, and he was there himself not very long ago. What does it mean? — how could he be mistaken? — I don't understand it at all!"

M. Richard was delighted at the event, because he thought that the embarrassing position of the young girl would place her in his power, and he rubbed his hands as he said,—

"Oh, mademoiselle, if you have the idea that a young girl can go about Paris without a guide, a protector, you are very much mistaken. Even for people who have lived in this city for a long time it is sometimes very difficult to discover those whom they are desirous of seeing; how then do you imagine that a young girl who comes to Paris

for the first time can know her way about directly. You see very well that without some friend to assist you, you will never find your Uncle Gogo; but, although you refused my arm just now, and would not respond to my compliments, I still wish to help you to find your family. Come, you wicked little thing, take my arm; I am not rancorous, and I still think you adorable."

Rose-Marie recoiled from the arm which he offered her, and contented herself by answering with a bow,—

"I thank you, monsieur, but I can find my way without a conductor; I must hope that he was not mistaken in the address of my other uncle, and I will go immediately to the latter's house."

"Oh, you have another uncle in Paris?" answered Richard, who was greatly vexed because the young girl so persistently refused his arm. "The devil, you must have a crowd of uncles; it begins to look equivocal to me."

"Yes, monsieur, I have two uncles here and several cousins, and as I am big enough to ask my way you need not trouble to walk beside me, monsieur."

"Oh, well, if you take it like that, little one! but you do rightly. I shall go on the same side if it pleases me, because in Paris one is free to do as seems good to him, and before long, perhaps, you will be glad to avail yourself of my protection."

Jerome's daughter listened no further to M. Richard's discourse. She looked at the scrap of paper which she held in her hand, and entering the first shop she saw, she asked her way to the Rue de Vendome. Then, following the directions given her, she went down the Rue d'Antin to regain the boulevards and go back by the way she came.

M. Richard followed the young girl, saying,—

"One can see very well that she comes from a village, to refuse my arm, little fool! I ought to treat her with disdain — but she is so pretty! The devil, if she should find her other uncle I shall be put out by it, and the little girl makes me trot about terribly. I have not dined and I am dying of hunger; but all the same I won't be balked; I must know where she goes. I will know who her uncle is — a shopkeeper, no doubt, — and I'll go every day and buy something of him."

Day was declining, and the young girl was forced to walk more slowly, for she was exhausted and fatigued. She remembered then that she had given away all the money she possessed, and had kept nothing for herself; but she did not repent having done a charitable action, and, while trying to collect again her strength, she said,—

"God will give me courage; he cannot wish to punish me for having done a little good."

"Is she going to make me measure all the

boulevards?" said M. Richard to himself, following Rose-Marie. "The little one is a deer! If I had not feared to lose sight of her I should have gone into a pastrycook's and bought some cakes. O Heaven be thanked! she is coming this way I hope."

In fact, Rose-Marie, who had easily remembered the names which had been given her, turned and entered the Rue du Temple, then, turning into the first street on her left, she was in the Rue de Vendome, and soon found the number she wanted —fourteen. She entered timidly to make inquiries of the porter, whom this time she found to be represented by an old woman with a pair of spectacles on her nose, and a very dirty old book in her hand.

"Madame, will you kindly tell me on which story Monsieur Eustache Gogo has his apartments," said Rose, in a very gentle voice, for she was afraid of irritating the portress and obtaining a similar reception to that given her by the surly porter at 62 Rue Saint-Lazare.

The latter, a mild and feeble-looking creature, completely absorbed in her "shilling shocker," was a little deaf; however, she saw someone come into her lodge and placed her book on her knees, crying,—

"Hey, what is it?—What do you want, my little one? I was just in a very interesting place —where the brigand Roger wishes to turn from

the good road his son Victor, who is 'The Child of the Forest.' Ah, this is a work which gives one the shivers! I give you my word of honor I couldn't eat my dinner, I am so much interested in Victor and his Clémence."

"Madame, I am very sorry to interrupt you," resumed Rose, "but my Uncle Gogo — on which story does he live?"

"You have read this work? is it not superb? and that poor Clémence, how do you think she will end? — give me your opinion, that I may see if it corroborates mine?"

The young girl drew nearer to the old woman, and spoke louder,—

"Madame, I ask for M. Eustache Gogo."

"Oh, yes, that is fine, you are of my opinion; but that rascal Roger, what a ruffian! and they say there are still some of that band of brigands, as I am an honest woman."

Rose was in torture. Happily she discovered a tin ear-trumpet on a stove; this she hastened to take and apply to the portress's ear as she renewed her question.

The old woman took off her glasses, looked at the young girl, and answered,—

"M. Gogo, my child. Ah, it's M. Eustache Gogo you are inquiring about; excuse me, but this romance is always running in my head; the other night I knocked a jug of water off the table and spilled it all over my bedclothes because I

was dreaming of that brigand Roger, and thought he had come to rob me."

"But, madame, my uncle? on what landing?"

"Your uncle, oh, this M. Gogo is your uncle then? I don't know him, my dear; what an odd name, if we had a Gogo in the house I should have remembered it, but I haven't a tenant of that name."

Rose-Marie was thus losing the last hope that had sustained her; she understood how terrible was her position; with eyes full of tears she looked at the portress, but the old woman had already put on her spectacles and resumed her book, and was muttering to herself,—

"I must find the place I had — I can't leave Victor in doubt about his Clémence. Would you like me to read a few pages to you, my child?"

"Are you sure, madame, that my Uncle Gogo does not live here?"

"He has never lodged here, dear. Mercy! I ought to know. I've been portress here for nearly thirty-four years. That's why they keep me in spite of my deafness, but in the evening when I go to bed I am careful to attach my ear-trumpet to my ear, and I sleep on the other. Oh, that brigand Roger! I shan't go to bed till he's been brought to book."

Rose-Marie left the lodge, for she saw well that the portress would say nothing further. She

went out into the street; it was dark then, and the young girl did not know which way to turn her steps. She wept, and put her handkerchief to her eyes, murmuring,—

"My God! my God! what will become of me?"

A young man came up to her, and took her arm, saying,—

"Well, well, my little prude, so you are crying now. It seems to me that the uncle who lives in the Marais is as difficult to find as the one who lives in the Chaussée d'Antin."

Rose had recognized the ugly gentleman who had pursued her since her arrival in Paris. But at this moment she was so much depressed that she had not the strength to repulse the young man; and only said, weeping,—

"But what can it mean; can it be that my cousin gave us false addresses? Why should he wish to deceive us? Oh, my poor father, you have sent me to Paris in the hope that my uncles would accord me a kindly welcome, that I should be happy here. Oh, if you could know that your daughter doesn't know where to go nor what will become of her in Paris, where she knows no one, how unhappy you would be! I shall go back home to Avon, to my father, tomorrow—at once, if it be possible. Monsieur, will you tell me how I should do to return this evening to Fontainebleau? Once there, I can go on foot to

our house. I should be so pleased if I could only get to Fontainebleau."

M. Richard laughed, as he answered,—

"Return this evening to Fontainebleau! but you must not think of that my pretty girl; it is absolutely impossible, it is dark, it is already late."

"Is there no travelling on the railway at night, monsieur."

"No—besides we are immensely far from the station. I repeat it is impossible for you to think of returning to the country this evening."

"But, monsieur, it is absolutely necessary that I should do so. What will become of me in Paris? Where shall I pass the night? I have no money left to go to an inn. Oh, but they would give me credit till tomorrow, I hope; then I could go and get my trunk; I can offer my clothing as payment, can I not, monsieur."

"My little girl, you talk like a child. First of all there are no inns in Paris; there are nothing but hotels and furnished lodgings; the first are very dear, the second very suspicious, nor do they lodge any one on credit, least of all a young girl who presents herself alone; they would have a very bad opinion of you, and, frankly, had I not travelled on the railway with you I should be inclined to doubt myself about your uncles and your cousins who gave false addresses."

"What can you think of me, monsieur," cried

Rose withdrawing the hand which M. Richard had taken.

"Nothing but what is pleasant I assure you. Come, don't be vexed any longer; take my arm, and I will conduct you to a place where you can spend the night secure from all danger."

"Where is that, monsieur?"

"Have confidence in me; what the devil, you can't sleep in the open air, and risk being picked up by the gray patrol."

"The gray patrol, what is the gray patrol?"

"Oh, it's something very alarming to young girls who go about alone in Paris at night. It takes one to the Salle Saint-Martin."

"What is the Salle you speak of, monsieur?"

"A place where they temporarily detain all the thieves and wayward girls whom they take during the night in Paris."

Rose-Marie uttered an exclamation of fright, and M. Richard took advantage of the fact that the young girl was trembling to put his arm beneath hers.

"Don't be frightened," he said, "don't tremble so. With me you have no danger to fear. I am going to take you to my aunt's house. She is a respectable woman who will be pleased to treat you as her own daughter."

Rose lifted supplicating eyes to the young man, and murmured,—

"Monsieur, you would not deceive me? Oh,

you could not abuse the confidence of a poor young girl who does not know where to find her family, and who so much regrets now that she came to Paris. I would not tell you an untruth, monsieur, you know that well, but are you speaking the truth to me?"

"Am I speaking the truth to you? Heavens, what makes you so distrustful? Come, lean on me, mademoiselle; I beg your pardon, but I don't know your name."

"Rose-Marie, monsieur."

"Why, then, Mademoiselle Rose—Rose-Fleurie—that name was made for you—take my arm."

The young girl hardly knew what she ought to do, for recalling the plans which the gentleman had held who now offered her shelter, she was doubtful whether she ought to confide in him. But she was overcome with fatigue and she allowed herself to be led, and even leaned heavily on M. Richard, who said to himself,—

"At last she will come with me. I knew I should get my way; one may accomplish anything with perseverance."

Richard drew the young girl on to the boulevards; but as he was as tired as she was, and as, moreover, he was desperately hungry, he turned towards a restaurant. The young man was then in funds, which was very unusual with him, and he said to Rose,—

"Before we go to my aunt's, my sweet child, it occurs to me we shall do well to have some dinner, I might rather say supper, for it is late enough for that."

"I thank you, monsieur, but I'm not hungry!"

"But I have had nothing to eat, mademoiselle, since this morning, and I am faint, which, added to the fatigue I feel, warns me that I must repair my strength."

"But, monsieur, can't you get something to eat at your aunt's?"

"I'm afraid that she won't have anything in the pantry, especially as she is not expecting us. There's a restaurant very near here, mademoiselle, one of the best. If you don't wish to eat yourself you can watch me; but, at least, you can rest during that time, and certainly you cannot deny that you are tired."

"In fact, monsieur, I am extremely tired."

"Come along, then, and don't tremble so, the matrons and maids of Paris very often dine at restaurants, and are not at all timid about it; in fact, they like to do so very much."

Richard and Rose-Marie entered a restaurant on the boulevard. There was nobody in the public room; however, Richard ordered a private one, and a waiter was about to lead them to it, when Rose, who had glanced about the large room, which was still lighted and had doors opening on the peristyle, entered it, saying,—

"Why do you not dine here, monsieur? here are tables all laid."

"Because it is more comfortable in a private room, mademoiselle; come along, where there are only two it is not usual to dine in the public room, besides, they are going to extinguish the lights here — are they not, waiter?"

The waiter hesitated to answer, for the modest and yet uneasy air of the young girl gave to her features an expression it was impossible to resist; and then the gentleman who was with her was so ugly that the restaurant keeper, who was necessarily used to seeing people tête-à-tête, divined immediately that they were not in accord with each other.

But Rose had already seated herself in the great room and she said to her escort, in a very decided tone,—

"Go where you please, monsieur, but I shall remain where I am; I will wait here until you have dined."

"What a little shrew she is!" said M. Richard to himself, "well, I shall make her pay later on for being so straight-laced, but now I must pass it over or she won't come with me. I must give up the idea of a private room, and, after all, it is much better so. I shall think only of having a good supper."

So M. Richard decided to sup in the large room and told the waiter to lay two covers, then

he went to Rose and essayed to conduct her to the table upon which they were serving the meal; but the young girl resisted and remained where she was seated.

"I have told you I am not hungry, monsieur," she said; "it is useless for me to come to the table, for I cannot eat."

"Why, how is that, and you have been in the open air so long, my dear, I beg pardon, mademoiselle, but to my knowledge you have taken nothing for a long time."

"I am too much troubled, too uneasy to think of eating, monsieur."

"You should have no further uneasiness since I am going to protect you, since I am your squire, and my aunt will accord you her hospitality. Come, sit opposite me at a respectable distance; we shall look like a married couple from the Marais."

"That's useless, since I do not wish to take anything."

"As you please, then; but I have a very good appetite, and I warn you that I don't like to hurry when I am at table."

"I will wait for you, monsieur."

M. Richard sat down before the cover that was laid for him; he called for a bottle of pommard, then he ordered some cutlets, a fowl and some fish. The distance he had travelled on foot since he left the station had made him as hungry as a hunter, and he frequently moistened his repast

with wine. He was very well pleased with his evening and determined to make a night of it. He began to grow very good-natured, his bottle of pommard was soon empty and he demanded champagne.

"My faith," he exclaimed, "I can refuse myself nothing to-day, I am too much pleased with my day's work. Will you have a glass of champagne, my pretty brunette-Rosette? You can't refuse me that!"

But Rose, feeling no disposition to accept, did refuse, for since the ugly young man had swallowed the pommard, his eyes, which were constantly turned on the young girl, had an expression which she could not endure. She shuddered as she saw M. Richard uncork another bottle, drink a full glass and refill it.

"Mercy, monsieur, are you going to drink that whole bottle?" said Rose, anxiously.

"And why not, my jewel? I must drink it alone, since you won't keep me company; but that doesn't frighten me: I can drink four like that without feeling it in the least."

M. Richard was boasting, for he got tipsy very easily; but, like those would-be brave folks, who shout loudest when they are most afraid, the young man thought he should regain his temerity by swallowing heady champagne, and the more it overcame him, the more he drank, and boasted that wine had no influence on his reason.

Eleven o'clock had struck. Several times already the young girl had said,—

"I am afraid your aunt will have gone to bed."

"My aunt, my aunt! don't be uneasy about it," answered Richard, whose tongue began to be very thick, "that's my affair, I'll be answerable to you for everything — that's my business."

However, Rose-Marie rose, and Richard decided to do as much. His eyes seemed to be starting from his head; he tried to assume a dignified air as he paid the waiter, but he was not steady on his legs. He went towards the young girl and offered his arm to her, murmuring,—

"Let us go now."

The waiter approached Rose and whispered in her ear,—

"Take care, mademoiselle, do not trust yourself with this gentleman."

Rose-Marie looked at the waiter affrightedly — she knew not what she should do — but M. Richard drew her along and she found herself on the boulevard with him. It was late and they passed only a few people. The young man, who felt he could hardly direct himself, held very tightly to Rose's arm, and endeavored to walk fast; he tried to lengthen his steps and hummed,—

"'Onward, march onward! towards their guns!' Oh, my faith, I have supped well, I have supped very well!"

"Does your aunt live far from here, monsieur?"

"My aunt, bless you! There are some slippery places on the boulevards — it seems to me the gas doesn't give so good a light as usual. Keep tight hold of my arm, don't be afraid. I am as steady as a rock."

Far from being steady, M. Richard lurched at every moment. In the restaurant he had only been stupefied, but since he had been in the open air he was as tipsy as possible, and began to be unconscious of what he said, or at least to forget that in order to deceive the pretty person who was on his arm, it was necessary to hide from her his designs.

Five minutes had hardly passed since they left the restaurant, when M. Richard tried to pass his arm around Rose's waist, saying,—

"Why, then, darling, we are going to love each other tenderly; we shall make an adorable little couple, but first I should like a kiss — just one little kiss!"

Rose-Marie pushed the gentleman, and sought to disengage herself from his arms, as she answered him,—

"Have done, monsieur, leave me! What does such talk as this mean?"

"What, more ceremony yet! more severity! Wait, my angel, all that is foolishness and nothing else."

"Oh, my God! But you offered to protect me, I have done very wrong to believe you."

"On the contrary, you must always believe me. Come, that pebble has turned my foot. Support yourself on me, darling."

"No, monsieur, no, I will not go any farther with you unless you tell me where your aunt lives, and I warn you in advance that I will not enter the house you are leading me to until I am assured that I am going to stay with a respectable person."

"Ha, ha, ha, a respectable person! — that's a joke! There's no question of that at all! you please me — I please you. You are coming with me, the aunt is all in my eye. Wait little one, watch for a cab, and we'll get into it so we may the sooner be at my home,— Rue des Jeunneurs, number — Come, I don't even know my own number! What's the matter with me this evening?"

Rose had withdrawn the arm which Richard had held; the latter threw himself on her, and clasping her with both arms, cried,—

"We'll go home together. I tell you, I'll make you happy. I have still enough money to hire a cab, and I believe we shall get there quicker."

And the young man, who had passed his arm around the poor little girl's waist, put his ugly visage close to her fresh and virginal face, and was about to besmirch it with a kiss, when Rose-Marie, to whom indignation and anger had given strength, disengaged herself from the arms that

were wound around her, and vigorously repulsing Richard as he was again trying to seize her, sent him rolling on the flags of the boulevard.

Richard swore like a madman as he tried to get up, which he could not easily manage, for it was impossible for him to maintain his equilibrium; but while he exhausted himself with his efforts, constantly falling on his hands and knees, she whom he had pursued during that entire day had taken flight, and when at length he got on his feet he sought her in vain on all sides. Rose-Marie had disappeared.

CHAPTER XII

The Gray Patrol

When she had parted from Richard, Rose ran for a long time without stopping. She did not know where she was going nor in what neighborhood she was, but it mattered little to her. The essential thing to her was that she should not be caught by the man whose infamous project had been unveiled to her. At last the young girl stopped, for she was out of breath, and found herself in a dark and narrow street; she perceived a stone and seated herself upon it, she looked shudderingly around her; she was faint with hunger, exhausted by her long rambling, agitated by her struggle with and escape from Richard; she felt desolate and afraid in these deserted streets where so many unknown dangers lurked, and big tears rolled from her eyes as she thought of her loving father and old Manon, and of her cosy room in the pleasant home in the pretty village of Avon.

"My God!" said Rose, lifting her gaze to the skies, "what will become of me if you abandon me—alone at night in this strange city, which they say is so dangerous! Ah, I should not have consented to leave my father. If I had

said to him, 'I am very happy with you, and wish to pass my life in this village,' he would not have dreamed of sending me to Paris! But for a long time I had not been so cheerful in our house because I wished to see some one again; my good father had thought that I was tired of being with him, and that was why he believed he ought to send me to my uncle. Oh, it is Heaven which punishes me! If I had had more confidence in my father I should have spoken to him about M. Leopold; I am sure he would have kept me with him, and now I should not be here without shelter in the middle of the night."

The clock on a neighboring church struck twelve; presently heavy steps were heard. The young girl rose hastily, saying,—

"If that should be the gray patrol that the ugly young man spoke to me about, and they should arrest me; it's much better to walk than to rest there on that stone, at least I can appear as if I were following my way, and if they ask me where I am going I shall tell them that I am going home."

The steps that Rose-Marie had heard were, in fact, those of the mysterious patrol which sets out at midnight, and goes on its rounds through Paris, up to the moment when the peasants arrive with provisions for the market and when day begins to break, for then the thieves are obliged to beat a retreat and the danger is at an end.

The gray patrol is a force composed of policemen dressed in citizens' clothes, and sometimes of those who wear uniforms. These men, used to thieves' tricks, are more alert in surprising them than ordinary patrols made by the troops or the national guard; the gray patrol walks silently, nobody talks in its ranks, all those who compose it seem to have the talent of walking without making any noise; often on entering a street the patrol separates into two parties, one of whom takes the right the other the left side of the street, then these men keep at fifteen or twenty paces distant one from the other, and thus they glide past the houses, of which their capes are the same color. They resemble shadows of whom the presence is not very certain, and often escape the notice of passers who are a little preoccupied. Thus in traversing Paris during two or three hours of the night you may meet several night patrols without seeing them, but they will not fail to perceive you. This patrol knows its world, it never arrests a young man who is leaving a ball, the reveller who is late at table with his friends, the gallant who has forgotten the hour while with his mistress, it recognizes these people only by their appearance, and it is never deceived; but warns those persons who live on the groundfloor, or on a low first floor, when they have forgotten to close their windows looking on the street. It tries to surprise the thieves who are forcing a door

or picking a lock or taking down the shutters of a shop. It awakens the drunkard who has gone to sleep beside a stone post, and takes him to his lodging if he is really drunk; finally, it makes a raid on all those vagabonds, those people without shelter, which it finds on its way, and who, for the most part, if not thieves aspire to become such. Formerly the awnings of shops, the balustrades which were outside the cafés, served to hide those unfortunate people who had no home, and who did not possess even enough to pay for a bed in a most miserable room, or, as a matter of taste, loved to pass the night in the open air. These hiding-places no longer exist, for the authorities have had them destroyed; there only remain the houses which are in course of construction, the entrance to those theatres which have peristyles, or the arches of the bridges, where they go to crouch down and hide themselves, also they often pick them up from the Théâtre de l'Odeon, under the peristyle of the Théâtre de l'Ambigu-Comique. One night the patrol discovered a little vagabond of twelve or thirteen years of age hidden inside an iron pipe left on the public road, near a place where they were repairing the drain.

The people who live in Paris in a state of vagabondage employ every trick imaginable to deceive the patrol when surprised by them. One of the most common is to pretend to be tipsy, or to have

been attacked and beaten by thieves, or to be dying of starvation ; but the gray patrol is not very credulous, and takes all those who cannot prove that they have a home or dwelling-place to the prefecture. It is, however, very embarrassing for lodgers who try to move in the night, and throw all their effects out of the window to some friends who serve as porters, in order that they may leave the next day without paying the rent.

It was nearly two o'clock in the morning, the streets of Paris were deserted, the gray patrol was making its rounds, an ill-dressed man slipped along in the shade, crossing the top of the Rue du Temple, and this man carried on his back a very large sack, which was seemingly very heavy, for from time to time he was obliged to stop to change it from one shoulder to the other. However, this individual endeavored to hasten his steps and was about to turn into the Rue de Grevilliers when suddenly several men surrounded him. He hoped that they were his comrades, but trembled on recognizing the gray patrol; the chief stopped him,—

" One moment, my friend, you are walking very quickly and you seem to be carrying rather a heavy load."

" O monsieur, it's because at this time it's much better to be going home. I am a little late because I stopped to drink with a friend, and I am afraid of being scolded by my wife; good evening, gentlemen."

"You are in a great hurry! what do you carry in that sack?"

"In this sack, gentlemen, are some potatoes and provisions for my family."

"It's rather late to be buying potatoes."

"I bought them in the evening, but I forgot all about my sack when I was drinking at the wine merchant's."

"Let's see your potatoes."

The individual who pretended to be carrying provisions to his family endeavored in vain to prevent them from opening his sack; when he perceived, however, that there was no way of evading the inspection he tried to fly, leaving what he was carrying in their hands, but they had foreseen his intention and prevented him from escaping. They opened the sack, the potatoes had changed into scraps of lead pipe.

"Where did you steal that?" asked the chief of the gray patrol.

Then this gentleman, renouncing his story of providing for his family, answered with a crestfallen appearance,—

"I have stolen nothing, I found that sack in the street and picked it up."

"Where did you find this sack?"

"Down at the corner of the boulevard."

"You are lying, you stole that in the Rue de la Corderie, where they surprised your comrade, who was still cutting lead pipe."

"What! has he let himself be taken? Oh, the old skinflint!"

"This is not your first attempt, within a week some one has stolen all the zinc from a house in the Rue des Blancs-Manteaux. Was it you?"

"Yes."

"What have you done with the zinc?"

"I have sold it."

"And when you had got the money?"

"I walked off."

"Where do you sleep?"

"In the race track, under the hills of Saint-Chaumont."

"And during the daytime what do you do?"

"Why, I go to the Court of Assizes to hear the trials — one must do his duty."

The patrol led off this frequenter of the Palais de Justice. In a neighboring street it perceived something round against a house and a post, it resembled from afar a garbage heap; but the officers are seldom mistaken, one of them went up to it and pushed it with his foot. The bundle moaned, and unrolled itself; it was a man.

"Ah, ha, what are you doing there?"

"Why, what's that?"

"What are you doing there? — answer."

"You see very well, I am sleeping."

"You must not sleep in the streets at night."

"And why shouldn't I, hey? Isn't the pavement free to everybody?"

"Why don't you go home?"

"I was so comfortable there."

"Come, you needn't act the drunkard, it's useless. Have you a dwelling?"

"I am not so stupid, why should I pay for a lodging? I prefer the side of a post."

"We will give you one then."

"Where are you going to lodge me?"

"At the Saint-Denis police station."

"I shan't stay long at your station."

"Come, march!"

"Stop a minute."

The vagabond stopped and picked up a dead dog, saying,—

"Wait, until I take my bolster."

A little farther off the patrol perceived an individual who had stopped against the door of a china shop and was trying to open a door; but this individual was attired in the costume of the Citizen's Guard, and, far from attempting to hide, he sang while trying to open his door,—

"'Oh, the joy of a soldier's life.' Hang it, I am very glad to get home to bed for all that; I told the lieutenant that I had frightful cramps and moved him to let me go. 'Oh, the joy of a soldier's life,' why doesn't my master key work this evening? there must be some dust in the lock, 'One serves the King and State!' How pleased Égérie will be to see me home so soon. 'And gayly, gayly, takes his way'—hang it,

somebody has ruined my lock; the key won't turn in it now, ah, it's turning—'And gayly, gayly takes his way'—good, it turns, but the door doesn't open. By Jove, how vexed I am, I shall be obliged to call Égérie, and I wanted to surprise her in her first sleep."

At this moment the china merchant turned, he perceived the gray patrol surrounding him and looking at him, and exclaimed,—

"Gentlemen, you perceive a member of a public body who is going home to bed with the permission of his chiefs. I am the master of this shop and have been married for only a year to a very pretty woman who brought money into the business. Since I married her my stock is the best in the neighborhood. I have customers by the score, all the young people of the street deal with me, one or the other of them buys a soup cup every morning, it seems that they break a good many; I have taken for a sign 'Unbreakable China'—it's an idea of my own. But I don't know what's happened to my pass key. I cannot open my door, I am afraid I shall be obliged to awaken my wife, my Égérie."

"Let us see," said the chief of the gray patrol, coming forward, "I shall perhaps be more adroit than you are and can make the key work perhaps."

"In faith, you'll render me a great service, M. le Commandant."

The police officer turned the key and then said to the shopkeeper,—

"Your key goes all right, but you remain here very uselessly, how can you open your door when someone has put a bar of iron across it inside?"

"Do you think so, monsieur?"

"I am very sure of it."

"That's singular, for I always say to my wife when I go on guard, don't put the iron bar at the door, for if by chance I can come back to sleep, I shall; but she must have been afraid, apparently, and she barred the door so that no one can get into the house. Poor little puss, I must wake her up."

The china merchant receded a little, and, while looking up at the windows, called,—

"Égérie, it's me, Égérie, it's your little husband. Come, come! 'Oh, the joy of a soldier's life'—she seems to be sleeping soundly, but I'll tap on the shutter with the end of my gun."

The merchant tapped on the shutters of the first floor, and cried anew,—

"It's me, Égérie, don't be afraid, you have put up a bar, my pet, that prevents me from coming in—take away the bar you've put, Égérie, and I'll be much obliged; ah, she's opening the window, she's awake."

In fact somebody very softly opened a shutter of the first floor, and a woman's voice which quavered a good deal, said,—

"Who is there?"

"It's me, Égérie, it's Joseph, your husband; I've come back to go to bed; draw the bolt, darling."

"It's not true, you're not Joseph, my husband, he's on guard; let me go to sleep, I don't like such jokes as these." And the shutter closed.

The national guardsman turned towards the gray patrol, exclaiming,—

"That's rather hard, in fact, to say I'm not her husband, she does not recognize my voice, what between fear and sleep; but I want to go to bed, I have no desire to return to the post where they'll all laugh at me. Hallo, Égérie, oh, hang it, wake up altogether, why don't you? It's me, it's Joseph, my pass key turns, but the door is barred inside."

The shutter of the first floor was half opened again.

"What, is it you, my dear?"

"Yes, it's me. Ah, she recognizes me at last. I knew well that it was only the effect of sleepiness."

"I think I must have been dreaming, my dear, I couldn't understand the noise at all."

"Come down and open the door that I may come in, but take a light so that you don't fall or stumble."

The china merchant rubbed his hands, saying,—

"Now I am sure that I shall not have to pass the night at the door. Gentlemen, I wish you a very good evening,—'Oh, the joy of a soldier's life.' Here's my wife coming down again, and—'Gayly, gayly take their way, oh, the joy—oh, the joy, oh—' now for a warm bed and sleep."

The patrol departed, but at about a hundred feet off the chief made a sign to his men to stop, and they all remained motionless and silent, with their eyes fixed on the windows of the china merchant's first floor, and awaited the end of the scene. The end was not long in arriving, as the patrol had foreseen. Hardly had the husband entered his shop and begun to put the bolts and bars on the door again, when the shutters were opened further, and a young man raised the window, from whence he jumped into the street at the risk of breaking his bones on the pavement; but the story was low, and the young man fell on his feet and his hands. He immediately rose and began to run with all his might. He passed in the midst of the patrol, who could see that the gentleman was only half clad, and that he held his frock coat on his arm. But the gray patrol did not arrest him, they allowed him to run, for they knew well that he was not a thief.

Then in a neighboring street these officers met a young girl who was walking very quickly, but who stopped all in a tremble on seeing herself surrounded by men who seemed to have come

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from beneath the pavement, and who had discerned her before she had even seen them.

"Where are you going so late, young girl," said one of these men, holding a dark lantern before Rose-Marie's face, for she it was whom the patrol had met.

"To my uncle's, M. Eustache Gogo."

"And where does your uncle live?"

"He lives at number 14 Rue de Vendome."

"Why are you alone in the streets at this hour?"

"Because I stopped to talk with some one."

"With your lover? He would have done well to accompany you, and not leave you to return alone."

Rose-Marie dropped her eyes, and did not answer.

The officers looked at her, then they looked at each other, and presently the chief resumed,—

"Would you like one of us to escort you?"

"Oh, I thank you, gentlemen, but I shall do very well alone." While saying these words the young girl resumed her walk, and rapidly departed. The gray patrol let her go after examining her. The men of the squad would have escorted her, but they would not arrest her.

CHAPTER XIII

The Wet Foot Café

For a long time after escaping, contrary to her expectation, from the clutches of the gray patrol, Rose-Marie continued to walk on, congratulating herself at not having been arrested by them and sent to the guard house, as Richard had informed her would be the case should she encounter them. The fear that she had experienced in meeting these much dreaded men seemed to have altogether renewed her strength for the time being. However, after a little time, as she became calmer, she found that she was retracing her steps over the same streets she had just traversed, and she said,—

"If only day would come! How can I walk about thus, through this long weary night? Yes, if day would but dawn, I would ask my way to the railway station; I would go directly there and as soon as the employees arrived, I would ask them if I could start for Corbeil. Surely if I were to tell them my father's name and address they would give me a ticket."

But the daybreak was still distant. The young girl found the night eternal, as it always seems to those who are suffering, mentally or physically.

However, poor Rose could not continue to walk; she had arrived at the entrance to a bridge, she felt the freshness of the river, and was asking herself if she ought still to go on, when her eyes distinguished, about a hundred steps away and nearly at the middle of the bridge, a red lantern or lamp, the uncertain light of which was projected over a proscribed circle, and from time to time this light disappeared, as though some one had masked it by standing before it.

The young girl soon heard several voices, she thought she could even distinguish singing and shouts of laughter; it was evident that several persons were gathered around a lamp placed on the middle of the bridge, but what were they doing there? Rose did not know if she should advance or retire, but either the one or the other would be equally difficult, as she was entirely prostrated by fatigue, and seeing a stone bench she seated herself upon it.

"I can go no farther," she murmured, "it is impossible for me to do so. But the people who are down there cannot be criminals, since they have a lamp and are laughing and singing. Heaven, which protected me from the gray patrol, is still watching over me, and then, it will soon be day, and then—"

The young girl had no strength to think further, she sank back on the stone bench, her eyes closed, she slept. Rose-Marie found herself

without knowing it at the entrance to the Pont Notre-Dame, and the place where she was sleeping was very near the "Wet Foot Café."

It is necessary to describe this café; the habitues of the Rotonde, of the Provençaux, of the Café du Paris probably do not know of this establishment. The persons who frequent the more modest cafés of the capital, and even the frequenters of the taverns, have never, it is very likely, heard of the "Wet Foot Café," which, however, has existed for a long time in Paris. For while much has been said of the curious, secret and mysterious things of this great city, everything has not been told, much of it has been forgotten, and much more will never be revealed.

On the middle of the Pont Notre-Dame, every night as midnight sounds from the cathedral clock, a woman, who holds under her arm a table and two or three chairs, from which the cane seats have almost disappeared, comes to arrange her establishment and begin her business. This woman lights a candle which is surrounded with paper to protect it from the wind; she places it on the table and taking from an immense basket some china cups, with or without handles, and always more or less cracked, she places them on the table around the candle, then she kindles some charcoal in a big brazier, upon which she sets an enormous galvanized-iron coffee-pot. This coffee-pot contains a beverage composed mostly of water,

to which she adds milk, some coffee grounds, and chicory grounds, and in which she dissolves some morsels of brown sugar. This is what the dealer terms café à la crême; sometimes she has some also without milk, for the true connoisseurs. It is this drink which she sells in the cups for one or two sous; lastly, she places on the table, with a certain pride, two or three journals of the day, which she has bought at a low price of some obscure cafés, just as they were closing. She is now ready for business and awaits her customers, who are not long in arriving, and who take their coffee standing around the table; the consumers only have a right to read the journals.

This is what they call the "Wet Foot Café," and it is very well named, since the frequenters are obliged, during the time it is open, to remain on the pavement, which is very rarely dry on the Pont Notre-Dame; it opens, or rather commences, at midnight and lasts until daybreak.

You can imagine what kind of company one may ordinarily find at a café in the open air; first of all many of those gentlemen who have no home, or who are quite as comfortable in the street as at home; then some countrymen, who are coming or returning from carrying their vegetables and their fruits to market, but the latter, after drinking their bowls of coffee, continue on their way and rarely stop to talk. It is also the resort of the wagoners, the ragpickers, the street

sweepers, of all those in fact who work at night, also of drunkards who are too late to get into their lodgings, and, finally, of loafers and idlers and all those men who do not know where to pass the night, and who often escape the patrol by coming to the "Wet Foot Café," where they read the journals and talk politics. The customers of this establishment change more often during the night than in the real cafés, though you may see some habitues, some men who come as soon as the candle is lighted, who seize the chair which the coffee dealer is not using and remain until daybreak, read all the journals which are on the table and retail them to all who arrive.

At this moment, the "Wet Foot Café" was in full swing; a dozen men had met there, the most part of them in blouses or smocked frocks, some of them in waistcoats; the greater part of them having holes, darns or patches in their clothing; one saw there several ragpickers carrying their baskets on their backs.

The dealer distributes her coffee, already sweetened, to the consumers, some of whom bring with them a great lump of bread, which they steep in their cups. But now the attention of the whole company is fixed on a little man with a large head, dressed in an old pair of trousers of olive velvet, and a blue smock frock, with a red belt around his body. This individual, who was only as tall as a dwarf, and who had arms and legs of a prodigious

size, was standing on the table, and was reading a paper aloud to the gentlemen who surrounded him, interrupting himself only to thrust his hand under his cap and scratch his curly red hair with a kind of fury. The dwarfish man had a harsh shrill voice, which carried every word he uttered distinctly to his auditors. This was why the latter often asked him to read to them from the paper.

"A two sous cup of coffee, Mère Chicoree," said a pale, sallow young man who had just joined the meeting, and whose grayish blouse was covered with mud from the top to the bottom.

"Why, here's Féroce," cried several voices, the owners of which tendered their hands to the new-comer, "you are very late to-night, have you been to a wedding? Where have you been taking a bath? You look like a dog who has been to all the four corners of Paris at full speed."

"Oh, hang it, that's nothing, I had a little difficulty with my mistress and the pair of us rolled into the gutter. I didn't want her to drink the brandy, that was my idea; as much wine as she wishes, but brandy — never! because I know her; when she has been drinking spirits she's ready to put her arms around the neck of the first man she meets. Thank you, no! only let that woman sup with some men friends and before the sweets are on the table you'll have been made a fool of! There's hardly any sugar in the lush this evening, Mère Chicoree."

"It's the same as usual. I always put the same weight of moist sugar, but you've such a sweet tooth, you want it like toffee."

"Silence there, you! don't you know that Ratmort is going to read the paper to us?"

"Why, yes, so he is; he's so big, is Ratmort, that one can't see him, even when he's standing on the table."

This sally was received with shouts of laughter from the whole company with the single exception of the one at whose expense it was made. The fat dwarf, after smoothing his mop of hair with his long fingers, turned his little, glowing green eyes on the young man whom they called Féroce, and exclaimed,—

"Say now, you mischievous youngster, if I'm not as tall as a grenadier you must know that I have the strength and courage of one. When you want a proof of it, you've only to say so; if you like I'll do the business for you here and now; who wants to bet a pint with me that I'll pitch him into the water?"

"He's an ill-tempered fellow, this little Ratmort, he gets angry before you say half a word. Throw me into the water, thanks! because he can swim like the carp that he is!"

"Don't tire my patience, Féroce, I'll grind you to powder, you miserable grain of salt."

"Come, gentlemen, haven't you done yet?" said an old ragpicker, in an important tone, as he

leaned proudly on his hook. "We were at a very interesting article in the paper, it concerned the welfare of the country and the political economy they propose to employ in regard to adulterated wines; one who loves his country ought to be interested in that article. I demand that Ratmort continue to read the paper!"

"Yes, yes, read the paper!" cried several voices.

"I'll go on reading," said the little man who was mounted on the table; "but if there's still anyone here who wishes to taunt me as to the inches more or less that nature has bestowed upon me, I demand a fight to the death at once, without delay, and immediately."

Having said these words the little being whom they called Ratmort resumed his reading of the paper.

"Hum! Hum! where was I? 'The minister of the interior does not receive to-day, but he will receive the—'"

"What does that matter to us?" cried a big, frightfully thin man, whose head was covered by an enormous leather hat, and who wore boots which came up to his thighs. "Do you think that we want to attend the minister's reception?"

"Silence, Blairot! if you interrupt me at every turn I shall lose my place, and not be able to find it again."

"Where do we stand among powerful foreigners?" asked a gentleman with an animated face,

whose nose was beautified by a crop of pimples. This individual wore a coat that had only one tail, and his boots were so trodden down at the heel that beholders expected to see him shed them at every step. Lastly his head was covered with an old black stocking, the foot of which fell like a tassel over his left ear; from a distance it looked like a policeman's helmet.

"Oh, here's Ladouille, going to talk politics!" said young Féroce, mockingly.

"Well, then, and why not? one owes to his country, to his institutions — my country is my God! — who can lend me a quid of tobacco? Don't all speak at once. Oh, they are misers! not a morsel of a quid for good fellowship's sake."

"Bless my pipe!" cried Ratmort, striking the table violently with his foot. "You don't want me to read the paper then? You're jabbering like a pack of magpies — and they say women are gossips! I contradict that proverb,— men talk more than women — when they don't restrain themselves. I quit the rostrum."

"No! no!"

"Stay, Ratmort!"

"Read, we are listening."

"We are attending to you," said the important-looking ragpicker, leaning on his hook.

"The fair ground at Rouen was yesterday the scene of the capital punishment of a merchant convicted of selling adulterated wine, of which

one hundred and twenty-eight pints were poured out in the presence of the commissioner of police. The fraudulent liquid ran in streams —"

"Oh, by jingo! how I should have liked to dabble in it," cried the individual with the black stocking cap, "how I would have washed my face in the liquid!"

"But doesn't it say, Ladouille, that it was adulterated — sham wine?"

"Sham or not, zounds, I'd lap it up if I died for it! and besides, do we ever drink anything else in the wine shops that we frequent? To get genuine, pure wine, one must go outside the slums, that's well known."

"Oh, pooh!" remarked the man with the big boots, "why, within the last few days they've made them empty a number of barrels in the streams at Courtville and at Vaugirard."

"Silence, citizens!" cried the old ragpicker, "let's keep on with the reading."

Ratmort stretched out his hand, coughed, expectorated at random among his audience, and resumed,—

"By the royal decree: To be nominated solicitors to the Court of First Appeal."

"The next! the next, our names are not on the list, that doesn't concern us!"

"The condition of the colony at Algiers becomes more and more satisfactory, the columns are arriving in force, Abd-el-Kader has retired into

the desert; they have taken a hundred camels from him."

"What else! what else! read lower down!"

"Not at all!" cried the old ragpicker, "I demand the continuation of this article, it interests me. I intend to take my family and settle in that colony — my nephew who speaks the Moorish will come with me."

"In fact," said M. Ladouille, balancing coquettishly the toe of the stocking which adorned his head, "that would perhaps be a good speculation to make; when you get there they'll give you some land, some victuals, some money, some tamed lions; you'll make the Bedouins build you a house; you'll form a small seraglio with five or six Bedouin women and as many Arabians, and you'll have nothing else to do but smoke and get yourself tattooed. I'll go with you, Old Rags!"

"You! I wouldn't take you; you'd be capable of drinking the sea and the fishes on the way."

"Oh, well, so much the better, one could go to Algiers with dry feet then."

"Silence, you there! Read, Ratmort!"

"'Subscription for the Belgian railway.' Who'll subscribe? Hallo, come now, hand over your funds."

"I offer my breeches to those who have none."

"I've ten sous and I venture to risk them."

"You've ten sous, old dog? What, you're

bursting with funds to that amount! I hope that you will breakfast this morning with your friends."

"And what if I don't?"

"I'll cozen you out of it."

"I defy you to do it. I've hidden it where you can't find it."

"I bet that if—"

"Hold your tongues, can't you, dash it! It's annoying when one wants to hear the news to have a lot of clacking idiots like that about. Come, my little Ratmort, read, old chap!"

But instead of reading, the odd little dwarf began to dance on the table, making grotesque poses, then he sang at the top of his voice, beating time by slapping his thighs,—

Ah! cibouli, cibouli, ciboula!
Trala, zig la, trou la la!
Ces sont les enfants d'Paris!—
Oui sont bleus quand ils sont gris!—
Le rendezvous des amis
Et des buveurs intrépides
C'est l'Café des pieds humides!

The company immediately shouted the refrain of this bacchanalian ditty in chorus, and several of the gentlemen wound up by tastefully executing the steps of the can-can, of which the last figure consisted in lying flat on the pavement on one's stomach, and moving the arms and legs as though one were in the act of swimming.

The old ragpicker alone took no part in the dizzy whirl. He remained motionless, leaning on his hook, and at the consummation of the chorus, he shouted in a loud voice,—

"I demand the continuation of the paper, and the article on Algiers."

"And I insist on the second verse of the song."

"The journal!"

"The song! he pesters us with his Algiers, silly old man!"

As his only answer, Ratmort slapped his thigh vigorously, and began to sing,—

Trala! zig la! trou la la!
La plus grande société
Tient dans la localité
Où prend-on en liberté
Les d'mi-tasses les plus splendides
Au Café des pieds humides!

The dance recommenced in all its graceful abandon; M. Ladouille lifted the proprietress from her chair, and circled with Mère Chicoree in a mad valse which partook of the nature of the chimney sweeper's dance and the cachuca, during which the young man named Féroce, seizing the opportunity and the last tail of the dancer's coat, tore off the latter, which he thrust into his blouse, to use it probably in reseating his trousers.

The gentleman who sported the black stocking

cap had several times barely missed throwing his partner to the ground, and the dance would in all probability have ended in his effecting that movement when a new-comer appeared on the scene. He broke through the circle which surrounded the dancers, and bursting into a shout of laughter, clapped his hands, and cried,—

"Bravo! well, they're amusing themselves here. A very good evening, gentlemen, ladies, and the company. Is not this the place where one can get a good cup of coffee with milk? Somebody told me they kept it here."

Mère Chicoree left her partner, who finished his dizzy waltz at the ragpicker's feet, and while she hastened to serve the new-comer, all the frequenters of the stall looked with a suspicious and rather uneasy air at the individual who had just arrived, and whom they saw for the first time in their company. These men had almost always a reason for fearing that a police spy would slip in among them.

But the individual in question paid no attention to the glances which were thrown upon him; his attention was wholly centred upon the cup he had just received, and he appeared to swallow the smoking liquid which it contained with much gusto, and exclaimed from time to time,—

"Well, that's good! that may really be called coffee! It's hardly sweet enough, but it's hot, which comes to the same thing!"

Meanwhile the intimates made their observations in a low tone.

"Look at that head."

"He's a Cossack in disguise."

"He has a look of proud decay."

"He has the trousers of a harlequin. Do you see the cape on his coat?"

"It's certainly a droll costume."

"Oh, and that hat; it's apparently a new style."

"I must get one like that to wear at Longchamp; I shall look like a lion from Florence."

"My faith, I like Ladouille's police cap much better; at least one can see what it is."

From the portrait drawn by these gentlemen one may readily recognize the button-maker who had travelled on the railway with Rose-Marie; it was he, in fact, who had just appeared at the "Wet Foot Café," and who was enjoying its refreshment.

Little Ratmort, who was seated on the table, looking mockingly at the individual with the plaited merino hat, said to him, after a while,—

"It seems that you're partial to coffee. How's that, eh?"

"Why, yes, I am very fond of it. For the matter of that I like anything that's drink."

"Oh, he's not lacking in taste, this odd fish. But say, isn't this the first time you've been here?"

"Where in the world did you come from, Cossack?" said M. Féroce.

This remark was followed by laughter and stampings of joy. The one who was addressed took the thing in good part, and, after swallowing the remains of his cup of coffee, he answered amiably,—

"It's the first time, in fact, that I've been here, but that isn't astonishing, because I only came to Paris yesterday, by the railway. I came from Orleans; Bichat, my old chum, wrote to me, 'Come at once, I've a good place for you.' I started immediately, you may be sure, for I earn so little there at my trade of button-making, and, jingo, I did well. I'm well pleased I came, I did well to hasten; there were many competitors for the place. If I'd been a day later I should have lost it; but I got here in time. Bichat offered it to me, I accepted, and begin my duties this morning."

"What place have you got, then?"

"Inspector of sweeping, nothing less than that, and thirty francs a month. It's fine, and the work's all done by three or four o'clock, and one has all the evening to himself. I can still work at my button-making if I want to."

"The devil!" said M. Ladouille, looking for the tail of his coat, "but it's a nice little position. Who's prigged the tail of my coat?—is nothing safe here?—do friends steal from each other?"

"For instance," resumed the button-maker, "one must get up early, at three o'clock in the morning, summer and winter alike, they tell me, it's necessary to be afoot, and, by jingo, I was so afraid of not waking early enough today that I didn't go to bed at all. And Bichat said to me,—'Go to the "Wet Foot Café," on the Pont Notre-Dame, and stay there till it's time to begin your work.' I started off, but I didn't expect the café would be in the open air. That joker of a Bichat said it was open all night; I should think it is indeed, I'd like to know how they could close it?"

"They carry off the table, the cups, the candle, there's nobody here — the establishment disappears."

"That's so in fact. Then one cannot dine here."

"No, my lad," cried young Féroce, slapping the button-maker on the shoulder, "but if you want to pay for your welcome among the comrades I'll take you presently to a capital restaurant. It's at the entrance of the Rue de Crussol, in a stall that only holds five people at a time, it's the Petit Very, in fact! Hang it, it's very well known! anybody'll tell you about it, and for ten sous a head we can dine like aldermen."

"Why, I should like very well to go with you, Bichat's advanced me three days' pay, and my faith I shall be much pleased to know the good places in Paris."

"Well now, come, you couldn't have fallen into better hands; there's not a public place in Paris that's a little spicy but Féroce knows it, ask any of the friends."

"Féroce?"

"That's my name, or rather my nickname, because I'm a little brutal to the fair sex, it's the way I court them."

"In revenge," said Ratmort in a mocking tone, "he's very careful how he behaves to men — bah!"

"And what's your name, inspector of sweeping?"

"My name is Glureau — Désiré Glureau."

"Oh, what a name! I shall call you Cossack, it's more genteel; it goes much better with your phiz."

"Cossack! ha! ha! Well it's all the same to me, so long as I remain Glureau."

At this moment the old ragpicker struck the top of the table several times with his hook, crying,—

"I demand the continuation of the paper, I pay often enough for brandy for Ratmort that he may keep me informed as to affairs in the East; the arrival of the inspector of sweeping should not interrupt our recreation."

"Oh, what a bore is this ragpicker with his paper!" said Féroce, turning a pirouette.

"I support the motion of Old Rags," said the

individual with the big boots. "I have several sewers to clean today, and when I'm at work with my mates I like to be posted on our political situation on the 'surface of the so-called globe' as they say."

"But why don't you read it yourself, since you feel obliged to know all that's going on?"

"Because I don't know how to read, maybe, young simpleton."

"The idea of not knowing how to read and wanting to argue on the governmental business."

"All the same, my young fellow, that's no obstacle. There's something better here, I wish to found a new journal; I wish to be the manager of a sheet that will serve the people in their need; I shall entitle it; 'The Ragpickers' Gazette.'"

"Why not the 'Stablemen's Gazette'?"

"And why not the pavers'?"

"And why not the wagoners'?"

"And why not the hucksters'?"

"Hold! after all, there should be a journal for each profession!"

"Come, come, don't dispute, my good fellows!" cried Mère Chicoree. "You must call your journal 'The Sharpers' Gazette,' and if all of that ilk subscribe for it I'll answer for it you'll do a good business."

"Ha, ha! bravo, Mère Chicoree. That's better than your coffee, that is."

"Come, read, Ratmort — the paper."

The dwarf again got up on the table and read,—

"The year eighteen hundred and forty-four will probably see the disappearance of darkness from the streets of Paris. The administration is about to pass a bill for furnishing a thousand lanterns with gas jets to light the public ways."

"They're stupid with their gas!" said a little ragged man, whose whimsical face looked like something between a cat and a monkey, "to want to illuminate Paris every night, what will they do on gala days, then?"

"Then you don't like the light, Flairon, hey?" asked M. Féroce, smiling, "you prefer the darkness."

"Mercy, it's the only time in the twenty-four hours that one can amuse one's self, play jokes, laugh a little. I'll break all their gas lamps; they hurt my eyes."

"Isn't there a sitting of the chamber?" asked the old ragpicker, leaning on his basket, "that interests me more."

"No, old fellow, the chamber is not in session now. What! you didn't know that? you a profound politician, and you want to found a journal! Here's a sentence against thirty-six thieves belonging to a gang who were arrested together—do you want me to read that?"

"No, no, it's needless."

"We know the business as well as those who judged them."

"Perhaps better," added M. Flairon, drawing from his pocket a piece of chewing tobacco, which he kneaded for some time in his hand before thrusting it into his mouth.

"Then would you like me to read some of the advertisements?"

"Yes, yes, it's sometimes good to know about these things."

"And then one gets to know what properties are for sale," said the ragpicker, "and one has the right to go and visit them."

"With the object of buying them, Old Rags?"

"No, but to pick up the rags that are inside."

"'Mutual Life Assurance Association.' Ah, that's not so stupid, that isn't mates; I propose that we assure ourselves mutually," cried Ladouille, "does that suit you?"

"Yes," said Féroce, "on the condition that they shall not pay unless one dies."

"That's not the idea. I'm young and sprightly, and I should have to pay as much as Old Rags, who's in the decline of life."

"I shall live much longer than you will," answered the ragpicker in a raucous voice; "he is cool, this young fellow here, I shall see the end of ten like you."

"'Medal of honor, floating coffee-pots with an indicator and a movable percolater.' O Mère Chicoree, that concerns you. You deserve well that some one should make you a present of a

coffee-pot like that. We should drink something worth having then."

"Indeed, and isn't that which I now sell you good? You are never contented. For the paltry sous they pay me they would like to have pure mocha with the thickest of cream."

"'For sale: tannery works with every facility for the payment—'Ah, here's your business, Old Rags; you can buy that, you can give fifteen sous a week—"

"For shame! a tannery, that smells too strong! When I take an establishment I want one of a higher order than that."

"'Wanted, agents and correspondents in the provinces for a fine work easily placed; a good discount will be given on the sale—'"

"Well, that'll suit me," cried Ladouille, "canvassing is my vocation. If I had not lost the tail of my coat I would apply tomorrow. No matter, give me the address, Ratmort; I shall go as a messenger."

"Number thirteen, Rue des Mauvaises-Paroles; ask for Monsieur P. T."

"That's confoundedly anonymous, I shan't go."

"'Hygienic water for the toilet. This restorative water has a magical effect, and causes an instantaneous disappearance of freckles, redness, pimples, callouses, and restores the skin to its first velvety freshness—' Wait! Wait! but that will do for me!"

"How much does it cost a bottle?" asked the gentleman with the big boots, wiping his lips with his cuff.

"Oh, the sewer cleaner wants some restorative water for the toilet."

"It's not for myself, but for three months past my wife has had two big freckles on her nose, it looks like an eruption and that's not pretty at all; if that water will cause them to disappear I'll make her a present of some."

"Five francs a bottle."

"Thanks! I think I see myself getting some, I believe it's worth about six sous; my wife will keep her freckles."

"'Bandoline to soften and beautify the hair—"

"Oh, bandoline! what's that trash for?" cried young Féroce, laughing.

"I've just said it's for the hair."

"Oh, pooh, I understand! If I had some money I'd lay in a fine stock of bandoline."

"'Col-cold-cre-cream,' by my pipe, I believe that's Latin!"

"No," said M. Flairon, "it's English; it means glue[1] and cream."

"Oh, my boys, how good that must be!" cried Ladouille, licking his lips; "if I were in funds I'd pay for a pot of it for us to eat between us—that must be perfectly delicious spread on slices of bread. These fat fellows of Englishmen are

1 "Colle": French for glue.

mighty fond of good eating. I'm sure it's a dainty they've invented to take with tea."

"Oh, that'll do, let's have something else. Hi; you up there!" said a big lanky man, whose face was besmeared with soot, and who had not yet spoken, "Isn't there a story in your paper? Read the story, it'll be more amusing than the advertisements."

"But there's no story in it, smokey."

"A pretty paper that is! no story, I want no more of that paper. Mère Chicoree, hand us over another!"

Monsieur Ratmort was about to resume his reading of the advertisements when young Féroce, who had left the company for a moment, returned hastily, saying in a low voice,—

"Ho, there, friends! have done with the paper, I've made a discovery. We have near us something a great deal more interesting than all the foolish things he's reading to us."

"What is it, then?"

"What has he there?"

"I saw a woman lying asleep,—down there on a stone bench."

"Oh, hang it! that's interesting, indeed, some street walker, some thief, perhaps, who's sleeping there because she can't go anywhere else."

"No, no; so far as I can see, she's something far from that."

"Let's go and see."

"Mère Chicoree, lend us your candle for a few moments that we may see with whom we have to do."

"Yes, for it's perhaps a street porter or market-gardener whom he has taken for a woman."

Monsieur Ladouille took the candle from the table and walked beside Féroce, followed by all the customers of the "Wet Foot Café," towards the stone bench where Rose-Marie was sleeping. They soon paused beside the young girl; Ladouille held the candle to her face, and all these men uttered exclamations of surprise at the sight of the charming vision that was before them.

"Well, now!" said Féroce, "didn't I say it was a find. Isn't she dainty enough for you?"

"Bless me! she's well cared for, this one."

"A true rosebud," said M. Ladouille, holding the candle still nearer.

"And prettily dressed; look at all those duds."

"She's tidy from head to foot."

"And she hasn't the face of a gay woman."

"She's not a Parisian, either."

"At least she comes from the outskirts. Take care, Ladouille, if you put the light under her nose you'll wake her up."

"How soundly she sleeps. She must be very much fatigued to sleep like that on that stone bench, and for all that she doesn't look as if she was accustomed to sleep in the street."

"Gentlemen," said young Féroce, "that young

girl or young woman, whichever she be, pleases me, and I shall take her to wife."

"Oh, we two will share her, Féroce," cried the little ragged man, drawing near to the stone bench.

But M. Désiré Glureau, the button-maker, who up to the present had contented himself with looking at the young girl, now said,—

"One moment, masters, one moment. I know this young girl—yes. Oh, I'm not mistaken, she travelled with me on the railway. She got into the train at Corbeil; she came alone to Paris; she has strayed, lost her way, she didn't find the people to whose house she was going."

"Why, then, sweeper, my friend, what does it matter to us that you travelled on the railway with this hall-marked jewel. What do you want us to understand by that?"

"That the young girl is virtuous, one could see that immediately in the carriage; she dared not raise her eyes nor utter a word. I offered her my place, I had a corner one, but she would not accept it for fear of inconveniencing me."

"Well, so much the better if she's a virtuous girl, I take her to be so; that will suit me, all the more because it will be something new for me."

"I tell you that this young lady shall not go with you!"

"Look here, old hunks—Old Rags, lend me your basket, and I'll put my treasure-trove inside

it and carry her on my back. That won't trouble me a bit."

The old ragpicker did not seem disposed to lend his basket, and Désiré Glureau looked at young Féroce as if waiting to see what he would dare do, when Rose-Marie, awakened by the noise which these men made around her, opened her eyes, then she closed them immediately, uttering an exclamation of terror.

"Oh, the little mouse is awake," exclaimed M. Flairon.

"She has a voice which vibrates like a bagpipe."

"Why did she shut her pretty peepers again? Is she afraid of us?"

Indeed the faces which she saw around her were well calculated to inspire Rose-Marie with terror, and, as her situation—sleeping at night on a stone bench in a Paris street—dawned upon her, she understood all that might be thought of her, and murmured in a voice trembling with fear,—

"Oh, gentlemen, don't harm me, I beg of you. I am a poor girl. I only arrived in Paris yesterday; I lost my way in the city, and, overcome with weariness, I seated myself on this bench and went to sleep, praying Heaven to watch over me."

"Confound it," said Ladouille, "you must have a great deal of confidence in Heaven to sleep in the street thus, with a little face like yours—"

"Don't be afraid, beautiful angel, open your eyes, there are none but pleasant people about you; and I, myself, offer you my room, an elegant apartment in a lodging house — which it hardly is,— and my heart, my person besides, into the bargain."

Rose-Marie quickly recoiled as the one who had spoken came towards her, as though he would take her hand. But almost immediately the button-maker, repulsing M. Féroce with a vigor of which no one would have believed him capable, placed himself before the young girl, and said,—

"Don't be afraid, mamzelle, you are known here. I travelled with you yesterday on the railway. It was I who sat in the corner and offered you my place. I am an honest man, you may trust yourself with me, although in the carriage the young man who was seated beside me wished to tease me because I had not a pocket-handkerchief; which does not prevent me from being a good deal better than him."

Rose looked at the Cossack's head. She recognized the one who spoke, and murmured, —

"Oh, yes, I do remember. I was with you on the train."

"Well, now, you see, we are acquainted. Wait, mamzelle, you interest me, for although you are sleeping in a nook of the bridge, I am very sure that you are not to blame for it, and that you are

good. All the greater need not to leave you here. You are trembling, you are cold, you see it isn't good to sleep in the street. Come with me, I'll take you at once to my mate's, to Bichat's house, Rue de la Huchette, he's a married man — settled. He lives near here, and his wife will take care of you — and when broad daylight comes you will see what you have to do."

The young girl did not know the man who was speaking to her any further than that she had travelled with him. But all the individuals grouped around her had a forbidding expression of countenance which was so far from reassuring that she did not hesitate for a moment to confide herself to the button-maker's charge, who, despite his ugliness, looked neither wicked nor perfidious. She therefore arose and took the arm which Désiré Glureau held out to her, as she answered,—

"Very well, I accept, monsieur — I will go with you to your friend's house."

"Wait! Wait! — hasn't he luck, the inspector of sweeping?" cried the ragged little man. "He's made a conquest of the beauty."

"Say now, you old boy!" cried Féroce, making a gesture as though he would prevent the button-maker from advancing, "Do you know you are a little bit too smart. Hasn't he the cheek, this ugly Cossack! What right has he to carry off this little girl, when it was me who found her? She ought to come with me, and not with you!"

But the button-maker continued on with the young girl, whose arm was in his, saying,—

"Leave us alone,— is mamzelle the kind that would go with you?"

"Why not, then?"

"Oh, he's taking her off, Féroce; he's cut you out, all the same," said M. Ladouille, going to carry back the stallkeeper's candle.

The young man tried to stop Glureau, but the button-maker repulsed M. Féroce by giving him a blow in the stomach with his elbow which extended him on the pavement, and at once went on his way with Rose-Marie.

All the other men who witnessed this scene saw the young girl escape them with rage, and would perhaps have thrown themselves on Glureau had not the day at this moment begun to break.

Already the streets were less deserted; the country people were passing, the grocers, the retailers of consolation were opening their shops; and all these men, so enterprising, so audacious, so noisy during the night, became uneasy and prudent at the approach of day.

Some instants later the "Wet Foot Café" had ceased to exist.

CHAPTER XIV

The Gogo Family

Rose-Marie, as we have seen, had vainly inquired for her uncle, Nicolas Gogo, in the Rue Saint-Lazare, at the number given as his address by Cousin Brouillard; nor, so far as the street and number were concerned, had the foxy-faced gentleman deceived her, for her uncle really lived in the house visited by the young girl, and everything was now in confusion in the handsome apartment occupied by that gentleman. Why, then, had the extremely uncivil porter sent her away, insisting that he did not know the person for whom she was asking? Undoubtedly, dear readers, you have already divined the reason. It was simply because, actuated by personal vanity, the purse-proud M. Nicolas Gogo had thought fit to change his name, and that he now called himself M. Saint-Godibert, or even De Saint-Godibert.

And wherefore had Nicolas Gogo changed his name? Wherefore?—Is it necessary that I should explain this fact to you? Do you not meet every day, in the world, in society, people who bear a name which has never belonged to them, because the one which they had received from their father

is common, mean, ridiculous, or, more often still, they change their name because they wish their origin to be forgotten? Their parents were simple country people, sometimes even artisans or servants; you can understand that such an origin cannot be desirable to men who have amassed money and who wish to frequent good society. To be the son of a farmer, of a shopkeeper! for shame, one leaves that to the middle-class people, to small minds, to people without capacity. One renounces his father, one renounces his family, his country even, if that be necessary, and one takes a new name, a very high-sounding, very distinguished, very imposing name, and one gives himself grand airs; one objects to, has a horror of, the "common people," one lives only in the good neighborhoods, one never frequents the little theatres of the boulevard, and one knows nothing of that world where one meets grisettes, or men who carry porter's knots.

Thus it was that in society M. Benoit became M. de Saint-Amarante; M. Baldaquin, the Chevalier de Beaugaillard; and Rousseau transformed himself into M. de Grandpré.

Poor fools, who think that they give themselves much merit by taking a name which fills the mouth, and who do not understand that Nicolas, Nicodeme or Eustache become very fine names when they are borne by great artists or men of genius. There was nothing astonishing then in

the fact that Nicolas Gogo, having made a fortune in Paris, should think of dropping a name which, in the first place, was that of his brother the farmer; and which, in the second place, had nothing distinguished about it, and which even afforded capital opportunity for joking.

"A man who has twenty thousand francs income should not be called Gogo," said M. Nicolas, one day, addressing his wife.

"Certainly not, monsieur," said the stout woman, who shared her husband's pretensions, "it makes me horribly ashamed every time that I go into society, and hear them announce, 'Monsieur and Madame Gogo,' it is such a foolish name; much more so now, when as it appears they have used it in a play which has been very successful on the boulevards; for they have there, some one told me, one M. Gogo, and they are incessantly repeating all through the play, 'What a common person this M. Gogo is.'"

"Then my dearest, I am not astonished that very often I see people turn round and laugh when someone pronounces my name. It is because they recall the play which you speak of; one reason the more for our dropping it. That is decided; I will bear it no longer. What shall I call myself?"

This great question had been debated through several days; at last one morning the little gentleman of the little nose, whom you already know,

as well as his wife, since you have seen them in the railway carriage, came to his wife, and rubbing his hands, said to her,—

"I have it! Saint-Godibert — I shall call myself, M. Saint-Godibert, what do you say to that?"

"Very well, it is an eminently proper title, it will insure respect; it will be necessary, however, that we should be careful to remember it."

"I am going now into my room to write it on some cards, which I shall place all about. In that way I shall quickly retain my new name; and we are going to move, so that in our new locality no-one will know who we are under the title, I should say under the name of Saint-Godibert."

But M. Eustache Gogo, when he became aware that his rich brother had changed his name had said, for his part,—

"Oh, Nicolas has changed his name, and why should I not also drop the Gogo? I wish to write for the theatre, to launch myself into literature; I have a great many more reasons than my brother for not keeping our father's name, which doesn't sound at all well, and which is not calculated to inspire publishers and managers with confidence. When I go to ask for a reading and they say to me 'What is your name?' I am always certain that they will laugh on hearing it, and, in fact, I have no sooner said, 'M. Gogo,' than I see them compress their lips, look at each other and chuckle among themselves. It is very dis-

agreeable. Oh, if I had a great reputation now I should mock at them, they would only be too happy to come and put themselves at Gogo's feet; but reputation is long in coming. I should greatly prefer to make a name immediately, and a name that would give no one a desire to laugh in my face directly I pronounced it, or when they name me as the author of a new play."

Eustache Gogo had also some trouble in determining upon the choice of a name. To re-name one's self is not so simple a matter as might be supposed. Finally, after some weeks of reflection and research, and some study of the Dictionary of Illustrious Men, the literary man paused at the name Mondigo, considering that very distinguished, very original, and very graceful.

When Cousin Brouillard became cognizant of the change of name of his two relations he had not failed to exclaim with a mocking expression,—

"Oh, so the one is Godibert and the other Mondigo. Come, I see with pleasure that they have, at least, preserved one syllable of their father's name; one has it in front, the other behind. All the same it is a distinguishing mark which will allow one always to recognize them as Gogos."

These changes of name had taken place several years before the date of our story, so that in society or in the world, and above all in the new society which they frequented, Jerome's two

brothers were no longer known by any other names than those of Saint-Godibert and Mondigo. Young Julien, brought up in his parents' ridiculous ideas, would not have cared to say that his father was named Gogo. As to Frederic, the big, handsome young man whom we also saw in the railway carriage, and who seemed to have more wit than the rest of the family, he knew very well his uncles' true name, but he was very careful not to employ it in speaking to them, for that would have been the way to cause them to close their doors against him; and as his Aunt Mondigo was young and pretty, and sometimes gave at her house gay parties frequented by artists, and as his Uncle Nicolas, who wished to imitate great people, also gave very fine dinners and balls, where they played cards, Frederic did not wish to close the house of either the one or the other against himself; although he himself was not the last to laugh at their pretensions, and to ridicule them.

Now, can anyone say why Cousin Brouillard had not spoken to Jerome of his brothers' change of name? Was it for fear of paining the good farmer? That is not probable. The gentleman with the fox's jowl experienced too much pleasure in saying sarcastic things, and things that were likely to prove disagreeable to the hearer, for one to imagine that fear of wounding Jerome's sensibility had induced him to keep silence on this head. Is it not, on the contrary, more likely that in giv-

ing the farmer the true addresses of his brothers without telling of their change of name, he had thought that that would bring about some embarrassment, some harsh words, disputes, which would give him new occasion to laugh at his cousins' expense?

Whatever had been M. Brouillard's thought, we have seen what events immediately followed his silence on so important a subject.

At present let us return to M. Saint-Godibert, who is giving a fine dinner in his handsome apartment in the Rue Saint-Lazare.

CHAPTER XV

A Table to Lay

They were occupied in laying the table in the dining-room for twenty persons; and in making other and elaborate preparations for entertaining an unusually large party. In the drawing-room, where the furniture had already been carefully arranged and dusted, they were preparing the candelabras, stocking them with fresh wax candles, and placing the card tables, those very necessary accessories for a successful evening, in convenient positions; in an adjoining room, for the benefit of those who did not play cards, they placed on the table some trifles calculated to afford small talk, some albums, the latest magazines, and portfolios of views and caricatures.

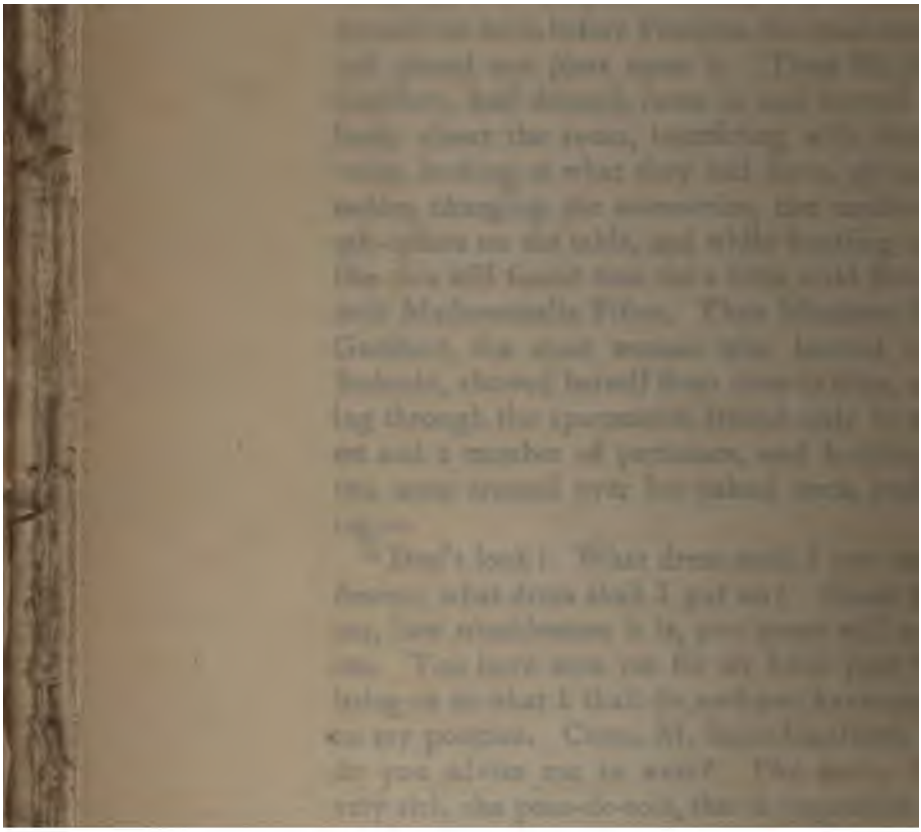
A little maid of about twenty years, who possessed black eyes, a snub nose and a high color, and, in fact, a very pretty, saucy, provoking little face and a fine figure—and, who, in this pretentious and parsimonious household, held the combined offices of lady's maid, parlor-maid and chamber-maid, bustled about in a very active manner. She was aided in these preparations by a man-servant, who did not seem well initiated. This was a young

man of twenty-five years of age, high-colored, heavily built, having a Norman head, and his hair worn long, in the manner of salad merchants.

"Mademoiselle Fifine," which was the name of the maid-servant, had been more than ten times around the table before François, the man-servant, had placed one plate upon it. Then M. Saint-Godibert, half dressed, came in and moved restlessly about the room, interfering with the servants, looking at what they had done, giving his orders, changing the accessories, the carafes, the salt-cellars on the table, and while bustling about like this still found time for a little mild flirtation with Mademoiselle Fifine. Then Madame Saint-Godibert, the stout woman who looked like a Bedouin, showed herself from time to time, crossing through the apartments, attired only in a corset and a number of petticoats, and holding her two arms crossed over her naked neck, exclaiming,—

"Don't look! What dress shall I put on, my dearest, what dress shall I put on? Good heavens, how troublesome it is, you never will advise me. You have seen me for an hour past vacillating as to what I shall do, and you have no pity on my position. Come, M. Saint-Godibert, what do you advise me to wear? The satin, that's very rich, the peau-de-soie, that is coquettish; the spangled dress, ah, that's very rich, also."

"My faith, Angélique, you'd better put—



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ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
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some anchovies, Fifine, that will be better than butter."

"But, monsieur, that will disarrange everything, the anchovies look very well over there."

"Do you think so?"

"Well, can't you advise me, Saint-Godibert?"

"Good heavens, my dearest, I don't know what to tell you, you have so much taste, you always look nice."

"Madame looks superb in the spangled dress," said the maid-servant.

"Yes, Fifine is right, your spangled dress makes you look slighter. You look like an East Indian dancing girl in it."

"Come, since that's your opinion I'll wear it. However, it seems to me that my apricot peau-de-soie dress makes my waist look smaller, that it makes me look quite thin."

"That's true, you're right, you must put on your apricot dress, besides it's such a beautiful color, and that blends so well, a woman and an apricot,—and some olives and some tunny here. François, where is the tunny?"

François looked at his master in surprise and said,—

"The tunny, tunny what? what is the tunny? what are you asking for, monsieur?"

"Good heavens, how stupid that fellow is, he knows nothing; do you realize that a servant in a good house is asking us what tunny is? Go

to the kitchen and tell Babet to give you some tunny."

While François went with measured steps to the kitchen, Madame Saint-Godibert, who had taken three steps towards her bedroom, returned immediately, saying,—

"Since you wish it, my dear, I will put on my apricot dress; but on reflection I think satin is very much worn. I have seen it lately at a good many parties, on lawyers' and stockbrokers' wives. Satin drapes very well, it is majestic, I should have preferred to wear my satin dress. I assure you it is much dressier."

"Good heavens, my dear wife, wear anything you like, I shan't oppose you; but why do you come and ask my opinion?"

"Oh, how contrary you are, Saint-Godibert, how sardonic you are; come, decidedly I'll put on my spangled robe. Have you placed the names of the guests at each cover?"

"No, not yet, I am going to do so, but is it good form to put the names of the guests beforehand at their appointed places?"

"It seems to me that's how it's done."

"That's how it's done, that is to say it is done so; I don't know if it's the fashion."

"Why not? It's a great deal more convenient."

"I don't believe that that's the way they do at the minister's and at the mayor's."

"It is necessary to be sure about it, then."

"And who can I ask now? Where's our son Julien?"

"He's dressing, no doubt."

"Oh, his toilet, he thinks of nothing but that, what money that boy spends on dress! Would you believe, madame, that for kid gloves only he had an account of two hundred and fifty francs at his glover's. I found that the other day in his room. Two hundred and fifty francs for gloves. It's frightful, he can't use all those himself."

"Ah, monsieur, what do you wish? It is very necessary that our son should be in the fashion. François, François, go to my son's room and tell him to come down, we need him."

François, who had just come in with the tunny in a fancy dish, started off with the dish to go and do what was asked of him, and M. Saint-Godibert called out,—

"François, François, where are you going now, stupid?"

"I am going where madame sends me, to her son's room."

"Is it necessary for you to carry the tunny to my son's chamber? Don't you know that that's for the dinner?"

"No, monsieur, I did not know, and is that what you call tunny?"

"Go and put it on the table and go up to my son, and try and hurry yourself a little. That fellow makes me boil, he's such a laggard."

"We'll sharpen his wits," said Mademoiselle Fifine, regulating the covers.

"Do you think so, Fifine? Do you think so, you tease, Fifine."

"Well now, monsieur, will you have done—if madame should see you."

"She's engaged in choosing her dress, that will take her a long time. The bread is cut, is it not, little one?"

"Yes, monsieur, it is there in the basket."

M. Saint-Godibert went to feel the bread, to assure himself that it was very stale, as he had ordered, for it is these little economies, or rather these niggardly tricks, which always betray parvenus who wish to pretend they are great people, but who never have enough true generosity to do things altogether well. Thus at a dinner where they serve choice dishes and the first vegetables and fruits of the season they will make you eat stale bread, endeavoring by an economy of some sous to draw in the expenses which they are obliged to undergo that they may boast of their manner of entertaining.

M. Nicolas Gogo, was necessarily in that class of people who wish to wear fine clothes, to give themselves fine manners, and to try and transmute themselves into personages of the first fashion, but who never wash themselves so clean but one may perceive on their faces something of the original rusticity.

"Fifine, Fifine, come and fasten my dress."

"I'll be there in a minute, madame."

"See that there is a salt-cellar before each cover. What a strange fashion! — that each one should have his salt-cellar. All that becomes very costly, but then, since it's good form,— and this array of glasses before each guest is frightful. I think the luxury of the table is pushed to extremes to-day."

"Monsieur, your son is coming down."

"Very well, François; oh, François, pay great attention to what I am going to tell you; after the soup you will offer to each person some madeira, you see that short square bottle which is over there."

"Oh, yes, monsieur, I know what madeira is, it's famously good."

"Oh, you know that it's good and where have you drunk it pray, since you have come from your Normandy and have seen no service in Paris except in my house?"

M. François became purple, he looked at his shoes and answered at length,—

"I said that was good so that I might appear to know what it was. As monsieur scolded me just now because I did not know what tunny was, I thought he would scold me again if I did not know what madeira was."

"Humph, that answer seems to me very Norman. No matter; we will clear that up later.

To return to what I wish to say. You will go, then, to each person with this bottle and you will say, 'Do you wish for some madeira?'"

"Yes, monsieur, I understand."

"Wait a minute, when anyone says 'No' to you, you will not press him, you will pass very quickly to another."

"Yes, monsieur, I shall pass very quickly to another."

"Finally, when anyone accepts, you will pour for him, but you will be very careful never to fill the glass more than to two-thirds full."

"To two-thirds."

"Wait, take a decanter, pour some madeira for me into this glass, there, enough, never higher than that. You have it two-thirds full."

"That's right, monsieur, I see the measure now."

"But it's well understood that if the person for whom you are pouring raises his glass before you get up to there, you will stop immediately."

"O monsieur, they are not obliged to swallow the two-thirds."

"Why, no, indeed, it's only a matter of sparing my wine to give them as little as possible of it. Hang it, they'll drink enough of it without that."

"I see now, monsieur, perfectly."

"That's fortunate."

Mademoiselle Fifine came in, looking at her thumbs and said,—

"Madame's hooked at last. Ah, mercy, if I had known that François had come down, I should have called him. My thumbs are crippled."

Young Julien arrived in the full dress of a dandy, although he was always constrained and awkward before his father.

"You have come at last, my son, you have been a long time at your toilet. At your age I dressed in two minutes and without seeing clearly to do so."

"Why should you not see clearly, father? You must have got up pretty early."

M. Saint-Godibert, seeing that he had said something foolish, hastened to add,—

"Tell me, Julien, as you dine often enough in the city, do they put the names of guests on the table beforehand?"

"The names, father?"

"Yes, the names of the guests, to indicate their places."

"Faith, I haven't paid any attention to that."

"Then, monsieur, what were you thinking of, and of what use is the education that I have given you, the money that I have spent for you, if you don't notice things so essential, so important for one who goes into good society."

"What's the matter, my dear," asked Madame Saint-Godibert, as she entered in her spangled dress, which gave her the appearance of a pagan idol.

"It's our son here, who does not know whether they put or whether they don't put the names of the guests on the table, and he dines out at the best houses; at least, so he tells us when he dines out, which happens frequently. Oh, if we had my nephew Frederic here, he could have told us at once, he would not have hesitated a moment. He's a spendthrift, a heedless fellow enough, it's true, but it must be confessed that he has very good form, the manners of a prince, a noble air, even. He knows everything that is done in the best society, that's why I have invited him. He often borrows money of me in the evening to play; that is disagreeable, it's true, but he is very useful here to give us information. He meets secretaries of embassies, English lords, oh, he is a dashing fellow; but my son is about all day and evening, I don't know where, with the grisettes, perhaps. If I should learn that you are capable of consorting with grisettes, I would renounce you. Not to know whether they put the names on the table, and he has learned Latin, too."

"By Jove, don't be angry, father, I remember now, they put them, yes, yes, of course they put them."

"Are you certain of it?"

"Yes, the last time I dined with Count Cornihoff they did so."

"Count Cornihoff, the devil, he must be a great personage," said M. Saint-Godibert, looking

more amiably at his son. "You went to Count Cornihoff's and you didn't tell us."

"Oh, it was only by chance, father, Dernesty knows this Russian nobleman and he took me with him."

"We must induce this nobleman to come here. I will invite him to dinner, I shall be flattered to have a Russian count at my table."

"He won't be able to come, father, he has gone back to Saint-Petersburg."

"That's vexatious, but M. Dernesty will come, I hope; he has returned from England, has he not?"

"Yes, oh, he will come to dinner."

"He's a young man of exquisite breeding, of noble manners, and his speech is fascinating."

"Yes," said Madame Saint Godibert, looking at herself in a mirror; "yes, M. Dernesty is very comme il faut. Is he not a marquis?"

"I don't think so, mother."

"Oh, he must be titled, he must be at least a chevalier. Some noblemen remain incognito so as not to be obliged to keep house. Ah, if I had a daughter, that would be the husband I should wish for her, would it not, Bibi?"

Bibi was then in the dining-room, very near Mademoiselle Fifine. He skipped briskly away from her, as he answered,—

"I am of that opinion, Angélique. See that the chafing dishes do not go out on the table as

they did the last time; one thinks one has something hot to eat and the plates are cold, it's very disagreeable. François, what are you doing down there?"

"I am opening some bottles, monsieur."

"But don't open so many beforehand, what good is that? You have a craze for opening bottles, what do you mean by it?—Why don't you listen to what I say?"

"Monsieur, there is still one more necessary for the table, Mademoiselle Fifine told me so."

"Let that be the last."

"Yes, my son," resumed the stout lady, continuing to look at herself in the mirror, "M. Dernesty is a young man whom you should take for a model. You are not with him as much as formerly, why is that?"

"Pardon me, mother; only that I could not see Dernesty while he was in England."

"See, Julien, take some cards and write the name of each guest, quickly, time is passing and we have done nothing, and soon the company will begin to arrive."

The son of the house went to look for some cards, an inkstand and a pen, and he put them all on to the dining-room stove. While coming and going he met on his way the lively Fifine, who was continually in motion. He put his arm around her waist and chucked her under the chin, or squeezed her waist. The waiting-maid re-

ceived all these little endearments as a matter of course.

"I am quite ready, father, the names of your guests, if you please?"

"Let's see, there are twenty; first of all, three of us; then my brother the literary man and his wife, and my Cousin Brouillard, that makes six already."

"Oh, you have invited your Cousin Brouillard," said madame, shrugging her shoulders, "you are too good; a man who always seems as if he wanted to annoy you. Your Cousin Brouillard is as wicked as a jackass."

"But, Angélique, you are mistaken, besides, I usually invite him, and if he knew that I had given a grand dinner without him he would be furious, and would never forgive me for it."

"And you're afraid of him, and you invite him because you fear his mischief-making, his venomous tongue; say so at once, you may as well confess it."

Madame Saint-Godibert was perfectly right. Her husband was polite to Cousin Brouillard because he was afraid of him and because he knew him to be capable of calling him Gogo before everybody. Had M. Brouillard been one of those good and benevolent men whom one sometimes meets, no doubt he would have been treated much less politely.

According to this it would be much more bene-

ficial to be like him, since in this world, favors, recompenses, places, honors, homage, are bestowed much more freely on those whom one fears than on those whom one esteems. Let us hope that these latter find in their heart and in their conscience something which indemnifies them for the indifference of the crowd and the injustice of those who have the dispensation of recompenses.

"In any case," resumed Madame Saint-Godibert, "I hope that you will not place M. Brouillard beside me, I do not like him."

"Be easy, you shall not be troubled with him. Julien, have you written those six names?"

"Yes, father."

"Well now, your Cousin Frederic, M. Dernesty, Monsieur and Madame Marmodin, M. Roquet, that makes eleven already."

"And the gherkins, monsieur, I don't see the gherkins."

"What are you meddling with, simpleton, if there are none here, it's because there are none, apparently; here are six dishes of hors-d'œuvres, that's quite enough, butter, olives, radishes, anchovy and tunny; no one serves gherkins, do they, Fifine?"

"No, monsieur, for I asked the servant of the rich deputy across the street about it, and they give very fine dinners."

"Oh, well," said François, going to take a bottle of champagne from a basket where it was

placed with other fine wines, which he had been eyeing for a long time; "at home we never dine without gherkins, those and red herrings are always on the table."

"Hold your tongue, François, nobody asks you what you do in your country; you talk too much for a servant. Have you written the eleven names, Julien?"

"Yes, father?"

"Put M. Dernesty near me."

"Yes, my dear; but, Angélique, to be beside the mistress of the house is always an honor, a favor, and we have some personages, superior people, to whom we should give the preference."

"And who are they, monsieur? who are they? Not M. Marmodin, I hope, who talks about nothing but Rome and the Romans—if you think that will amuse me."

"He's a savant, my dear, and they say that some day he will be a member of the Institute."

"When he is I'll consent to have him beside me, and not before; ah, wait, give me M. Roquet, he's very amiable, very gallant with the ladies."

"That's impossible, Angélique, Roquet is a very agreeable man in society, but we don't stand on ceremony with him, we must reserve the places of honor for persons who can be useful to us. I have put Dernesty on your left, but it's necessary that we choose the one who sits on your right with a great deal of care. Ah, and we have

M. Cendrillon, a capitalist. He intends to build a railway for his own use, to transport him from his house to his department at Paris. He is enormously rich; that is the man who is worthy of consideration."

"That's possible, but I don't want him near me at dinner; that man has no manners, and then he speaks so loud, he has a voice that deafens one; also M. Cendrillon uses very ugly words, and is sometimes very free in his propositions, and I don't like him."

"Madame, a man who can build himself a private railway has a right to use a broad joke now and then; it's allowable in a rich man."

"Well, I should like some one else near me."

"M. Doguin, and his wife, go on writing, Julien, that will make fourteen. M. Doguin is head clerk in the private office of the minister of the interior. He is a man who could be very useful if one had any demands to make; one's appointment as a deputy for example."

"In fact, my dear, I don't see why you should not be a deputy, and later on still more; you should aspire to everything, M. Saint-Godibert; but I don't want M. Doguin near me."

"And why is that, Angélique?"

"Because he has a horrible infirmity in his feet,—oh, that's something that I can't bear."

"What, does he tread on his neighbor's corns?"

"Why, no, monsieur. What! don't you un-

derstand? an odor arises from them which is insupportable."

"What, M. Doguin? can he have such a disagreeable trouble? I have never seen anything of it."

"Put him beside you then, and you will be able to tell me something of it."

"Go on, Julien, M. Soufflat and his daughter, sixteen; will you have Soufflat beside you, Angélique; you cannot say that he is not amiable. What a cheerful disposition, he laughs incessantly at everything or nothing. If one were to say 'Soufflat, your father is about to die,' or 'your daughter is very ill,' I believe that he would laugh. Ah, that's a delightful disposition, and then he's eligible for election in his neighborhood."

"Where is his place?"

"I don't know, my dear, but I do know that he has a place, and that he has had there a balloting of votes to nominate him as deputy, and it appears that it hung only on a thread. If Soufflat had received only six more votes he would have been nominated; but it seems they have only six electors in the county. It was M. Doguin who gave me these facts."

"That's all very well, but don't put M. Soufflat near me. He's too cheerful, too fidgety, he plays with his knife, with his fork, he pretends that he is going to drop the plate that he is passing, and all that tires me; he's too much of a buffoon."

"In that case I will put M. Villarsec; oh, that man is very good form, he has a very distinguished figure, and then he was formerly attaché to an ambassador, a man in authority, in China, I believe. He's a man who has travelled in all parts of the world, and brought back with him some negroes and some rough diamonds, he has discovered some mines, he is enormously rich."

"I have nothing to say to the contrary, but he's too serious; he never smiles; that man, he's always so very grave that he prevents me from eating."

"There's nobody left but the young married couple, the Broussaillons, and Major Krouteberg."

"Ah, give me the major, I accept the major; he's an amiable gallant man, a true chevalier with the ladies."

"The major, certainly, he goes into the best society, but in spite of that I don't see in what way he could render us any service, and I wish—"

"I wish either the major or Monsieur Roquet; arrange everything as you will, but I'll accept only the one or the other for my right-hand neighbor."

M. Saint-Godibert was very much embarrassed; he did not know which of these two personages he should honor by placing him near his wife; however, the table was completely laid, the cards only were to be placed, and it was getting near

the time for the company to arrive. In order to make an end of it, that he might go and finish his toilet, the master of the house was about to place the major's name at the right of that of his wife, when an unexpected detonation, followed by a stream which presently covered a part of the table and the personages who were about it, changed the whole scene.

For some minutes M. François had been employed with one of those bottles of which the cork and the neck, covered by a lead capsule, played havoc with his imagination. First of all, he thought that he could, with a simple corkscrew, easily uncork the bottle, but after vain efforts he at last perceived the wire which held the cork; then the Norman servant had taken a knife and had set to work poking with it at the cork and the wire, and after long work, and at the moment when he began to despair of success, the cork had popped out and the sparkling foam had burst forth with all the more force because M. François awkwardly tried to keep it in, first with his finger and then by placing the neck of the bottle under his armpit.

Madame Saint-Godibert uttered an exclamation of fright, the son dropped all the cards which he held, and Mademoiselle Fifine fell on to a chair, with a look of despair. Then could be heard from all sides, these words,—

"O you wretch, the tablecloth is ruined —"

"And my spangled dress is destroyed!"

"There's some wine in the anchovy!"

"My head is full of it!"

"The stupid, great animal!"

"The table must be entirely relaid —"

"And my hair was done so well!"

"It's abominable!"

In the midst of these angry cries which rose against him, M. François answered, by shouting also at the top of his voice,—

"Is that my fault, could I know what it was going to do? Could I suspect that you had fireworks in your bottles, fusees, jets of water, and that it would go off like a cannon; you might have warned me, at least."

M. Saint-Godibert could contain himself no longer, in his anger, not finding a cane to his hand, he took the olive dish and tried to break it on François' head, and, instead of restraining her husband, Angélique cried,—

"He's a scamp and he deserves to be whipped till he bleeds. Saint-Godibert, make him as naked as a worm, and flog him from his feet to his head."

But Julien held his father's arm, the latter having upset all the olives on the floor, and Fifine signed to François to escape, which he did immediately, but carrying away with him the bottle which had caused this storm.

"Never let him come into my presence again," said M. Saint-Godibert, going on all fours to pick

up the olives, "if I should see him again I should carry myself to an excess."

"And I," said madame, "if I see that clown again I shall be capable of injuring him."

Fifine remarked that they had no time to lose, and that instead of bothering about François they should hasten to re-lay the table, while madame should go and change her dress and rearrange her hair.

The waiting-maid's reflection was agreed to be right, and each one set to work; the father and the son helped Mademoiselle Fifine, and in a short time the things were all taken off the table; then they put on a clean cloth and soon it was laid again. The master of the house thought then that he would put the cards which indicated to each one his place; that took him a good deal longer, he turned and returned around the table, muttering,—

"My wife between Roquet, no, Major Krouteberg and Dernesty; me, between Madame Doguin and Mademoiselle Soufflat, no, I had much better place Mademoiselle Soufflat near my son; she's very rich is this young lady, and in passing a plate or in offering something to drink one can be gallant. Julien, you must be very attentive to Mademoiselle Soufflat."

"O father, mademoiselle is so ugly and her nose is so long and she sounds it like a trumpet, I like Madame de Broussaillon and Madame Marmodin much better."

"My son, it is not a question of knowing which you like. You cannot marry those two ladies, as they are already married; while Mademoiselle Soufflat is a match of two hundred thousand francs at least, and it seems to me that such a fine dowry should diminish the length of this young person's nose."

"But, father—"

"Silence, once more, monsieur; do you think that I give a grand dinner, that I spend an extravagant amount of money without obtaining anything for the politeness which I show; learn, monsieur, that in giving a dinner, one should always serve some end. I have often heard M. Cendrillon say, a dinner is a very adroit diplomatic agent, above all, a dinner with truffles, and my dinner abounds with truffles. You will sit, then, between Mademoiselle Soufflat and Madame Doguin; Madame Marmodin beside Frederic; my brother, the man of letters, near M. Marmodin, the savant; M. Cendrillon,—where the devil shall I put M. Cendrillon? A man who builds a railway for his own use, it is necessary to give him a good place, and to think that my wife won't have him near her; my faith, women are sometimes very contrary, I'll put him near M. Broussaillon and my sister-in-law. Oh, my Cousin Brouillard, now, he's one whom it is very difficult to place, he has such a bad tongue, if I could only put him between two deaf people; and

M. de Broussaillon, he never listens when anybody speaks to him, and Soufflat, he laughs incessantly, but he doesn't know why. What a puzzle and worry, I should not like often to have twenty people to dinner, besides, it's ruinously expensive."

Madame reappeared, she had put on her satin dress and repaired the disorder which the champagne had effected in her hair. She glanced at the order of the places and wished to make some changes, but then her husband cried, blowing his nose furiously,—

"My faith, Angélique, if you change anything that I've done, I warn you that I won't look after anything during dinner, it shall go as it may; I won't give myself the trouble of working like a galley slave to have some one come and disarrange all I have done."

"Be quiet, my dear," responded Angélique. "Whom have you invited for the evening?"

"Oh, a dozen people. Julien did you ask your friend, M. Richard?"

"Yes, father, he's coming; I gave him your new address, for he thought you were still living in the Rue de Mathurins."

"Shall we have some artists, some musicians who sing comic songs accompanied by the piano?"

"I had invited two or three, my dear, but they refused to come, for the matter of that, be easy; M. Dixcors, that gentleman who does a heap of

curious things, who imitates all the animals, and who can play the ventriloquist, has promised me to bring one of his friends who sings anything that one wishes, the melodies of Chou — my faith I don't know what Chou — "

"Of Schubert, father."

"Yes, I believe that's it, Choubert, I knew well that there was chou in it."

"Have you invited M. Ramonat?"

"Ramonat, no, certainly I have not invited him, I was very careful not to do so; the last time that I met him on the boulevard he had an old coat, threadbare, in fact, he was very badly dressed. Faith, I quickly turned my head so that I need not bow to him, as nothing compromises one so much as bowing to a person who is badly dressed."

"But you astonish me, for M. Ramonat, so they tell me, has obtained through his daughter's influence a very fine place in the office of commissioner of police."

"Truly, oh, the devil! I'll bow to him the first time that I meet him, even at a distance."

"M. Ramonat should, in fact, have had that place," said young Julien, "but the matter fell through and he has not got it."

"That is what I said, a man who has such a threadbare coat, I won't bow to; hereafter I wish to appear as though I did not know him."

"But don't you know that his daughter, who is

very pretty, is being courted by the nephew of a peer of France, who has sworn that he will marry her?"

"A peer's nephew, hang it, one never knows where one stands then, but decidedly I must bow to him then, I shall bow to him, I see well that I made a mistake. I cannot bear ill-dressed men. When they come near me it always seems to me that they are going to borrow some money from me."

This conversation was interrupted by Fifine, who came running, saying,—

"Here's M. Brouillard, he's not rung yet, but for five minutes I've heard him rubbing his feet on the straw mat on the landing. I believe that before coming in he listens and tries to hear what they are saying in the house of the person whom he has come to see."

"He's capable of it."

"Cousin Brouillard already, botheration take it."

"Oh, Angélique, take care, don't let such words escape you before people or I shall feel like hiding myself under the table."

"That's all right, monsieur, that's all right, it seems to me that I know how to speak, and it's not for you to direct me, you who say tonnelle for tunnel in speaking of a railway, and you said the other day before a whole drawing-room that the streets of Paris were infected with thieves."

"Well then, madame, and why shouldn't that

be said, the streets are infected with thieves, the forest with brigands, I've always heard it said like that."

"No, monsieur, one should say infested, I am sure of it, I have consulted M. Marmodin."

"And I have heard my brother the literary man speak like that.

"If he were to put such phrases as that in his plays, that would be very nice, but you are so puffed up when you speak about your brother."

"Madame, I don't say 'botheration take it,' that's the language of a Billingsgate fishwoman."

"Hold your tongue, monsieur, you make me sick at the stomach!"

The quarrel was growing warm, and young Julien seemed too much amused at hearing his parents dispute to think of appeasing them, but Fifine restored the calm by saying,—

"If Cousin Brouillard hears you he will think that you are quarrelling, and he would be very much pleased."

"Fifine is right," said Madame Saint-Godibert, offering her cheek to her husband, "I am very obstinate. Kiss me, my dear."

"With pleasure, Angélique."

"But it was your cousin who made me forget myself, he always comes before everybody else, and often before the table is laid; of course he does it because he wants to see everything that is going on, to stick his nose into everything;

under the pretence of wishing to help he'll go into all the rooms; why, monsieur, the last time I surprised him in a great closet examining all my dresses, touching everything, feeling everything, when I asked him what he was doing there — if he didn't have the face to answer, I was looking for your toilet-room."

At this moment Cousin Brouillard showed his nose at the end of the drawing-room, and immediately Nicolas Gogo and his wife went towards him, exclaiming,—

"Oh, it's Cousin Brouillard, the dear Coûsin Brouillard."

"Good-day, my dear cousins."

"How nice of you to come so early, there are so many people who make one wait, but you are always on time; we were speaking of it just now."

"Oh, I always hasten to come to your house, it's such a great pleasure to me, and then I say to myself, if they should have need of help in doing anything, why then I should be there."

"Oh, thank you, cousin, we have our people, our servants, we have no need of extra help."

"Here's an olive on the floor," said M. Brouillard, stooping to pick up the olive, "it seems that your people don't pay much attention to what they are carrying. The table looks very handsome, you'll have a good many guests I see."

"We shall be twenty," answered M. Saint-

Godibert, as he twisted his nose with his handkerchief to try to make it larger.

"And you are counting on twenty."

"What do you mean by we are counting on," cried the big lady with an offended air, "do you mean that we ourselves are zeroes?"

"Pardon, cousin, I did not wish to say that, I expressed myself badly; when I say, you are counting on twenty, I mean to say, have you invited twenty people to dinner? that's all. Your dress is charming, cousin, what fine material, is it not?"

"Oh, it is the finest of satin."

"But your petticoat shows, cousin, was that intended?"

"Oh, mercy, my petticoat shows, and I had not perceived it, that's what it is to be hurried, to have to dress so quickly. Fifine come with me and adjust it. Cousin Brouillard, won't you go into the drawing-room with our son?"

"With great pleasure, don't trouble yourself about me, I beg of you; when one expects so many people one has so many details to attend to. I'll go to the drawing-room; by the way, you are going to have a wine merchant in your house."

"A wine merchant, where?"

"A wine merchant, a wine merchant is coming, oh, how horrible! If I were sure of that I should move immediately."

"But no, that's impossible, who told you that, cousin?"

"Mercy, it was a messenger down below; I saw them moving into the shop and I said to him, 'Who is coming in there?' and he answered, 'Monsieur, I think it's a wine merchant.'"

"Fifine, go down quickly and ask the porter who's going to occupy the shop down there, if it's a wine merchant or a butcher, add that we shall give notice this evening by the agent."

"But madame, at this moment I have so much to do."

"Go, Fifine, run immediately, I don't want to remain in this uncertainty."

The waiting-maid went down, consigning to the devil the gentleman with the fox's jowl, who had hardly arrived before he caused trouble to her employers. M. Saint-Godibert went to put on his coat, madame threw herself upon a chair, Julien went into the drawing-room to adjust his cravat, and Cousin Brouillard looked under the table to see if he could find some more olives, saying,—

"My faith, there I am with you, a wine merchant would make me desert a house; that exposes one to meeting drunkards incessantly, to men who dispute; often on coming into one's house, one receives blows destined for some one else, it is infinitely disagreeable."

At length Fifine came up, all out of breath,

and M. Saint-Godibert came running without his coat to see what she would say.

"There has never been any question of a wine merchant," said the waiting-maid, casting an angry look on M. Brouillard, "it is a dealer in paper hangings who is going to occupy the shop; it will be very well decorated, very brilliant. They will have some paper at twenty francs a roll."

"Ah, I breathe more freely," said Madame Saint-Godibert.

"I knew very well that it couldn't be so, and that you were wrong to alarm yourself," said monsieur.

"Why should M. Brouillard tell us things that are not so; one should be very sure about such a thing before speaking."

"Pardon, cousin, I told you that a messenger had answered me thus, but I knew nothing more about it, the messenger was mistaken, that's all; that sort of people like wine merchants so much, they are not like us, they think they should be established everywhere."

"Will you not go into the drawing-room, then."

"I have been there; your petticoat still shows, and your dress has also some plaits in the back, that's perhaps intended, but it's not pretty. I will go into the drawing-room; if you need me don't hesitate to call me."

Finally, M. Brouillard went into the drawing-room.

"What a nuisance that man is," said Madame Saint-Godibert, "to come and tell us that a wine merchant is about to come in beneath us; to put despair into my heart."

"Well, madame, you're very credulous to believe anything that your cousin says, he is always inventing stories to sow discord."

"Fifine is right, Angélique, you should never believe him."

"Fifine, put up my petticoat, the company will be here in a moment and I don't want to have plaits in the back. Everything is ready, I hope."

"But, by the way," exclaimed the waiting-maid, after arranging her mistress' dress, "I must have some one to help me at table, it is impossible for me alone to wait on twenty persons."

"That's true," said M. Saint-Godibert, admiring his coat, "Fifine cannot wait upon twenty, we will not see François again; however, it's necessary to have some one, a man-servant is very correct."

"Undoubtedly so — if you were to ask the porter to come up."

"Oh, yes, the porter! once when I begged him to assist me in something, he answered me in a very impertinent tone, 'For whom do you take me, do you think I am a servant?' Wait, monsieur, you must pardon François; after all, if he had known what kind of wine that champagne was, he would never have touched the bottle. It was only done in ignorance."

"Fifine is right, we must still avail ourselves of François; besides we cannot find any one immediately to replace him."

"But, at least, Fifine, you must warn him to pay attention, to remember everything that we've said to him."

"Don't be uneasy, madame, I'll indoctrinate him."

At this moment the bell was heard; immediately the Saint-Godibert couple entered the drawing-room hastily, exclaiming,—

"Here is the company, they must not find us in the dining-room, they might believe we were our own servants."

CHAPTER XVI

The Company in the Drawing-room Before Dinner

A quarter of an hour had barely elapsed after the events recorded in our last chapter, when nearly all the people who had been invited to dine on this occasion with Monsieur and Madame Saint-Godibert were assembled in the over-furnished drawing-room of that worthy couple, where we will join them that I may introduce them to my readers.

First of all, in this tall, spare, yellow man, grave of aspect, who preserves a deeply reflective expression even when uttering a merely perfunctory "How do you do?" you will doubtless recognize the gentleman whose affections were so deeply fixed upon the ancient Romans. His wife, the mercurial and vivacious Madame Marmodin, was already snugly ensconced in a corner of the room, and was chatting, laughing, and diffusing gayety around her as was her invariable custom.

Beside the pretty little brunette, from which pleasing point of vantage he amused himself by looking, as was his proud privilege, in two directions at once at the assembled company, was M. Roquet, who was attired as nearly as possible

like a dandy. Then another young man with pleasing face and manners, who laughed a good deal at Madame Marmodin's observations. This was M. de Broussaillon, whose wife, young and pleasing, also, was seated a little farther off, near M. Julien, whose tender glances she pretended not to notice. Then there was M. Cendrillon, a tall stout man with a good face, who spoke in a loud voice, who laughed a good deal and seemed as much at his ease as if he had been in his own home; and then came M. Doguin, whose neighborhood was avoided by everybody. In another part of the room a pretty blonde, with white shoulders, was seated on a settee and seemed indifferent to the insipid compliments which were addressed to her by M. Soufflat, a little man of four feet ten, who, in order to make himself look taller, almost constantly stood on the tips of his toes, and in the drawing-room always looked as though he were about to cut a caper.

In this blond lady the reader has, doubtless, recognized M. Mondigo's spouse; as to the latter, he had taken possession of Major Krouteberg, to whom he was unfolding the plot of a play which he was writing, and which ought to run, at least, six hundred consecutive nights.

Major Krouteberg was an excellent man, who had all those qualities which are so desirable in society,—he listened as long as one wished, he approved everything that one said, he paid com-

pliments to all the ladies, and played at all the games; having so many precious qualities it was impossible that he should not be sought after in society.

The major, whose square and rather red face had a look of German good-humor, heard for the sixth time, at least, the details of a denouement which must dissolve the whole audience in tears and insure the success of the work. He only made from time to time an inclination of the head which signified, "That's very good," and at intervals dropped also this phrase,—

"That will be very prettily done."

Mondigo contented himself with these two responses, one in pantomime, the other very accentuated, and continued to relate his plot; only when the major did not seem to be paying such close attention, or remained for a long time without laughing, he paused, and looked his hearer in the face, crying,—

"Well, then, don't you like this scene?"

Then the major, who looked as if he were waking up, was careful at the proper moment to continue his pantomime and his exclamation, and say, shaking his head like a mandarin on a mantelpiece,—

"Oh, that will be excellent, everything will be very prettily done."

Madame Doguin, a large, handsome woman, who had been pretty and who was still so seen from

a little way off, had posed herself on an easy chair where she seemed throned above the company; first of all because she looked extremely tall when sitting and was, besides, seated upon several cushions; and in the second place, because she was continually looking around her and throwing smiles to right and left, like one who was distributing favors.

M. Villarsec stood in a little corner holding himself rigid and serious, like a Prussian soldier being drilled. A little farther off Mademoiselle Soufflat, whose nose had some points of resemblance to an elephant's trunk, was seated on a chair and had nobody near her to talk with, which seemed to lengthen her nose still further. Last, but not least, Cousin Brouillard came and went, thrusting himself in or gliding by where people were talking, and above all where they seemed to desire that their conversation should not be heard.

However, the Saint-Godiberts endeavored to receive their numerous company graciously, and did their best to avoid an awkward appearance in the midst of all this society; but the best appearance which a parvenu who wishes to resemble a nobleman can make is to look like a clown disguised as a marquis. If Nicolas Gogo and his wife had been content to appear only as good people, to be natural in trying to receive their company, well, no one would have found anything to ridicule in their drawing-room.

Madame Saint-Godibert ran from one to the other trying to give herself airs, which did not accord at all with her Bedouin's head. M. Roquet had already told her three times that her gown was ravishing, so she passed and repassed before Major Krouteberg that he might say as much, but the unhappy major was so closely pressed by the man of letters that it was not possible for him to slip in a word to the mistress of the house.

Madame Saint-Godibert approached her husband and whispered to him,—

"Our brother is almost insupportable, when he gets hold of anyone he won't let them go again. Here he's been talking for a quarter of an hour to Major Krouteberg, I am sure that he is recounting one of his plays, and the poor major dare not even say one word to him, I am certain that he is in torture; call your brother, won't you."

In place of answering his wife, M. Saint-Godibert exclaimed,—

"Oh, Mademoiselle Soufflat is all alone in the corner and nobody is paying any attention to her, it's very impolite! What is my scamp of a son thinking of? he has no eyes or ears for anyone but that little coquette of a Madame Marmodin. Julien! Julien! my son!"

M. Julien pretended not to hear his father, because he suspected what he had to say to him, and when he saw him coming from one side he

quickly threaded his way to another part of the drawing-room. M. Saint-Godibert made futile efforts for some moments to attract his son, who seemed to be playing at hide-and-seek with him; but Cousin Brouillard, who saw and heard everything, stopped Julien, took him by the arm just as he was again about to evade his father, and held him, saying,—

"My young cousin, you do not hear your estimable father, who for a long time has been calling you and looking for you in every part of the drawing-room, and who certainly must have something very interesting to say to you to judge by the determination with which he is pursuing you; ah, here he is, cousin, here is your son, whom you were looking for, I believe."

M. Saint-Godibert came towards his son, saying furiously,—

"Mademoiselle Soufflat is all alone in that corner over there. Will you kindly go at once to her and pay her some attention, or I shall stop your allowance at the end of the month, and then we shall see how you will manage to buy gloves the color of fresh butter."

M. Julien went to Mademoiselle Soufflat's side, murmuring,—

"A pretty thing to talk about my allowance—"

"What did he say," asked M. Saint-Godibert, looking at his cousin, who hastened to answer,—

"He said, 'It's a pretty thing to talk about!'

but I don't know whether he meant Mademoiselle Soufflat or his allowance. It seems that your son is not satisfied with what you allow him, he is, however, very well dressed, very elegantly dressed, I must admit it."

"Not satisfied! I should like to know what he has to complain of, not satisfied, when I give him forty francs a month,—forty francs, and he has nothing to buy but his dress, for he has lodging, food and lights in my house. Well, now, don't you think that that is enormous? except for my wife, he wouldn't have more than half of it."

"But, mercy, cousin, forty francs certainly is something, in our time it would have been much. I can well believe you did not have forty francs to spend on your clothing at your son's age, in truth you were not dressed nicely. Now people spend more, they are so dandified. I am almost astonished to see your son make so elegant an appearance if you only give him that."

"Oh, hang it, he runs bills, he goes into debt."

"The devil, that's vexatious."

"But I shall not pay them."

"Then that's the same to you as if he had made none."

This conversation was interrupted by M. Cendrillon, who approached the master of the house and poked him in the chest, exclaiming,—

"Well, I feel that I shall be able to eat some dinner — and you, my dear Saint-Godibert?"

"Me, M. Cendrillon, I'm entirely of your opinion, dinner will be quite welcome."

"Do you feel likewise?" said M. Doguin, approaching them. This was addressed to Cousin Brouillard, who scenting M. Doguin's approach had begun by taking out his snuff-box and treating himself to a pinch of snuff. He answered, however, while taking two steps backward,—

"Oh, I have some appetite, but I am in no hurry, I know that in my cousin's house they always dine very late when they have company."

"But at the same time as everybody on 'change," said M. Saint-Godibert, assuming the manner of a capitalist. "Six, half-past six."

"That's very late," said M. Cendrillon, "for the matter of that it's a quarter past. Are you expecting some one else?"

"Yes, Dernesty, and my nephew Frederic."

"Oh, the two inseparables."

"But when they have served dinner we shall dine; certainly we shall not wait for these gentlemen, my nephew is always late, and M. Dernesty is the same."

"It's their way," said M. Brouillard, evading M. Doguin.

Madame Saint-Godibert could contain herself no longer. Seeing that her brother-in-law would not leave the major she decided to go and break into the midst of the conversation, exclaiming,—

"Well, gentlemen, you are very amiable, chat-

ting between yourselves instead of paying court to the ladies; ah, major, that's not like you."

The poor major, who was delighted at someone coming to deliver him, hastened to incline his head to M. Mondigo, and he was about to go towards the superb Angélique, but the man of letters held him by the lapel, saying to him,—

"We have only three more scenes, and I want to have your opinion on my last act, which I have already begun four times; but I think very well of the way which I will tell you—"

"Oh, pretty, very pretty."

"The daughter is seduced by a conspirator who has two wives—"

"That's very pretty."

"She poisons her seducer by means of an orange, which I consider a denouement of great effect."

"Oh, perfect."

"However, somebody has told me that in some German play they also serve an orange in an important scene, it has given me the notion of substituting a lemon. What do you think of it?"

"Oh, pretty, very pretty."

"The lemon is newer than the orange, but the difficulty is to get the lemon eaten by the French. Oh, what a luminous idea! I'll transport my scene to Italy, where lemons are sweet, and my denouement will become quite natural."

The major inclined his head, and resolved to

leave the literary man, who then perceiving M. Villarsec placed himself before him, saying,—

"Yes, I am delighted to have found this lemon, the scene transpires in Italy or in Provence. It will be a historical drama, I have arranged that, but should I say citron or lemon, that's one thing that I hadn't thought about. What's your opinion?"

M. Villarsec, who was a man who was always rigid and serious, looked at M. Mondigo almost impertinently as he answered him,—

"Monsieur, if it concerns some lemonade I confess to you that I don't know anything about it, and I advise you to consult some one more expert in that respect."

"Lemonade," cried Mondigo, becoming pale on the end of his nose, which always happened to him when he was wounded. "It was my play that I was speaking of, monsieur. You have not heard my plot, and you could not understand it. I took you for Major Krouteberg."

Before M. Villarsec had answered, M. Marmodin drew near the literary man, and took him by the arm, exclaiming,—

"Oh, I am sure you will be of my opinion, Mondigo, these ladies laugh, and will not believe me. I have asked M. Cendrillon who only makes an evasive reply."

"What is it, Marmodin?"

"Mademoiselle Soufflat came into the drawing-

room with a kind of mantle with a hood which recalled to me the 'cucullus' which the Romans wore, and the hat which she has taken off and put on the divan comes from the 'petasus' or the 'causia'; we have still the 'galerus,' and the 'apex' which served the Romans, male and female, in their toilet, but I am not sure as to the 'petasus' and the 'cucullus.' M. Cendrillon answers me, 'gibus,' but that's not the question."

"Oh, my faith," cried M. Cendrillon laughing, "I know nothing at all about your antiquated Latin, speak to me of business, speculation, negotiation, railways, well and good, I will answer you."

"And you will be on the track," cried M. Soufflat, forcing himself to keep on his great toes.

"Oh, bravo, on the track, not bad! I always like puns, but why don't we dine, it's a quarter to seven, my stomach is beating a general alarm."

"Is M. Dernesty not coming," said the blond Clémence to Madame Saint-Godibert, who was then beside her.

"Oh, he's sure to come, we have invited him, but he's a young man who's so much sought after in the world. Every day he has two hundred visits to pay."

"He must be very tired by evening," said Cousin Brouillard, thrusting his muzzle between the two sisters in law.

"Do you think he goes on foot, then? The young man keeps a cab."

"I was not aware of it. I did not know the young man's means. What is he doing?"

"Why, nothing, that is to say, he speculates on the Bourse."

"Oh, gambles. Is that an occupation?"

"Oh, you know nothing about it, cousin; why now the young men of fashion who have a fortune do nothing else; at least, that is M. Dernesty's opinion."

The cousin's only answer was a grimace, and he drew near to Madame Marmodin, who exclaimed,—

"But I do not see M. Frederic. What, is M. Saint-Godibert's nephew not to be of this party?"

"He is coming," said M. Brouillard, "they expect him."

"Oh, I should say so. It's not possible that our host should have forgotten a member of his family."

"Of his family, ah, you think then that my cousin has no other relations than his nephew."

"Of course as I have never seen any others I think it."

M. Brouillard leaned towards the young woman, and whispered in her ear,—

"You are not aware, then, that there is still another brother, who has a daughter, very pretty in truth."

"Why, truly, and why does one never see them

here, or at M. Mondigo's? Have they quarrelled with that brother?"

"Oh, it's not that, there are other reasons than that. This brother is not rich, he follows a very simple occupation, he is a farmer, one might almost say a ploughman. But I don't understand myself why anyone should despise those people. Were not our first fathers themselves farmers? Did they not cultivate their lands, they and their children? See Abraham, Jacob, Laban. As for myself, I don't think with my cousins, nor do I blush on seeing their brother; I went to pay him a little visit not very long ago, the good Jerome."

"You are right, M. Brouillard, and I approve all that you say. I am very much astonished at what you tell me about that. I am surprised that Clémence, with whom I am so intimate, should never have spoken to me of this other brother of her husband."

"Oh, she isn't any better than the others, the dear lady; and then the idea of her confessing that she has a country brother when she gives herself the air of a duchess."

"Good heavens, how queer the world is!"

"Oh, yes, it's even more than queer, it has numberless ugly aspects. You understand perfectly after what I have told you, that I said it without malice, I am everybody's friend; if I wished to be malicious, I could say a great deal more."

M. Brouillard was, perhaps, while he was in the mood for it, about to prove the truth of what he had said, but at this moment the drawing-room door opened and François announced, in a very husky voice,—

"M. Dernesty and my nephew Frederic."

All the company shouted with laughter at François' new blunder, and Frederic coming into the drawing-room partook of the general hilarity and bowed to the company, saying,—

"Ladies and gentlemen, you perhaps were not aware of the fact that I was François' nephew, it is a little surprise that I have been keeping for you until today."

However, M. François, who saw that he had said something stupid, reopened the door of the drawing-room and thrust his head in, crying,—

"M. Frederic is the nephew of my boss, of my uncle,—oh, ah, no, that's not it—"

"That's all right, that's all right, François," said Frederic, pushing the valet outside, "I don't know how you will pull through the day, you are beginning it so well."

"Is that clown beginning to conduct himself in an asinine manner," cried M. Saint-Godibert, going from one to the other, "I don't know what's the matter with him today, but he's even worse than usual."

M. Dernesty, who had arrived with Frederic, was a young man of twenty-eight years, of middle

height, but well built, and wore his clothes, which were well cut and in good taste, with much ease and grace. This new personage's face was rather handsome than otherwise, although his features were not good. His skin was yellow and his light-brown hair grew too low on his forehead. His gray eyes were small but very vivacious in expression, they turned and shifted so incessantly that it was very difficult to meet their glance. His nose was small, his mouth was cautious, and all formed a sufficiently distinguished whole. Add to this the small talk of a dandy, the most dazzling assurance, witty little speeches, and those sarcastic flings which are always well received in a drawing-room. Then with the ladies he had the art of giving his glances a tender, a melancholy or a passionate expression, according to circumstances; such was the person whom they called M. Dernesty.

The arrival of the two young men had caused a general movement in the drawing-room; the ladies responded to their bows by gracious smiles, the men shook them by the hand.

After addressing to the mistress of the house one of those commonplace compliments which have been said a hundred times, but which Madame Saint-Godibert found ravishing and thought had been made expressly for her, Dernesty, speaking to people here and there, soon found his way to the vicinity of Madame Mondigo; the beau-

tiful blonde responded by a very modest movement of the head to the bow which the young man made her, however, the latter remained near Clémence, and despite the reserved and almost cold manner with which these two people had greeted each other, one who was closely observant would have noted that Madame Mondigo's face was animated, that her physiognomy now wore an entirely different expression, that she took particular care to put in evidence her pretty hands by moving her slender fingers, and that Dernesty, while not appearing to pay more attention to this lady than to any other, noted the divers movements of the lady's fingers with as much care as if he were looking at a telegraphic signal.

As this was passing on one side, Frederic had approached the lively and laughing Francine and retailed to her immediately all the witticisms which came to him. Madame Marmodin laughed at all that the young man said, and the latter seemed to think sometimes that she laughed too much, and that she did not seem to pay attention to his words.

A little apart stood M. Brouillard, observing all this and smiling maliciously; then he transferred his glances to the man of letters and his friend Marmodin, at this moment the latter exclaimed,—

"Yes, but notwithstanding all that, my dear Mondigo, you have not answered my question on the subject of the 'petasus' and of the 'cau-

sia'; but, first of all, I wish to have your opinion on the 'cucullus'; what is it, according to you, that the Romans understood by that word?"

M. Mondigo scratched his nose and his ear in turn, for one may write plays for the theatres and even, at a pinch, be a literary man, without having pursued his study of Latin very far; he was, therefore, rather embarrassed, and muttered between his teeth,—

"What do I think of 'cucullus,' oh, my faith, pardon — exactly what I should think of anything else — 'cucullus' — yes, I remember — that is to say — I seek —"

"I am very curious," said M. Saint-Godibert, rubbing his chin, "to know what answer my clever brother will make."

At this moment Cousin Brouillard pushed his elbow and said to him in a low tone,—

"Cousin, it seems to me that it's not very wise on your part, when speaking of Mondigo, to say, 'my clever brother,' for really it would seem, according to that, that you look upon yourself as stupid, and also the other members of your family."

M. Saint-Godibert pressed Brouillard's hand, and answered,—

"Oh, hang it, you're right, your remark is very just, what the devil was I thinking of? I'll not say my clever brother again, I'll say, my brother the genius, hey?"

"That will amount to the same thing, and besides that will not be correct, for I don't believe that Mondigo is a genius, although he has written a play on a lemon, according to what I've heard; call him the literary man, that means nothing."

"Very well, I shall only say, my brother the literary man, the author."

During this conversation M. Marmodin harassed his friend Mondigo, whose embarrassment he began to understand, and whom he was probably well pleased to humiliate with the weight of his knowledge. M. Mondigo continued to scratch his ear, muttering,—

"Cucullus, cucu — oh, I know what that is."

"Hang it, I also know what 'cucu' means," said M. Cendrillon, laughing half way down his throat, "everybody knows that Latin — "

"Oh, M. Cendrillon goes too far, he's too free in his remarks," murmured Madame Saint-Godibert to Major Krouteberg, "if he lets himself go thus already, what will it be when he has drunk some champagne? That man always makes me tremble in a conversation."

"What," answered the major, rolling his big eyes, "he has spoken of, oh, I dare not repeat that word."

"I recognize you there, major, I recognize you there, you would rather swallow that word than allow it to escape."

M. Dernesty, wishing to put an end to the embarrassment of Clémence's husband, advanced suddenly and said to him,—

"Why, by Jove, monsieur, you must be joking to ask that question, for everybody knows well that 'cucullus' means cuckoo."

"That's it," said Mondigo, "that's it, cuckoo, the word would not come to me."

"However," murmured M. Brouillard, "It should have come to him rather than to any other; but it was sufficiently adroit of M. Dernesty to have helped him."

"Well, now, gentlemen, you are wrong," cried M. Marmodin, triumphantly, "ah, I expected you would say that, you are confounding 'cucullus' with two ll's, with 'cu-culus', the last word signifies cuckoo, but the one with two ll's, which I had in mind, means 'capuchon'—hood, and not cuckoo."

"Heavens, how learned that gentleman is," murmured Soufflat, holding on by the chimney piece that he might more easily increase his height.

"Well, my dear, is your dissertation on cuckoos never going to end," cried the lively Francine, mockingly, "don't you know that you frighten everybody with your knowledge?"

"No doubt he has his reasons for touching on that subject," cried M. Brouillard, looking at Mademoiselle Soufflat's nose; the damsel was

looking at M. Julien, who obstinately turned his glances another way.

"Oh, my faith, I am quite ready for my dinner," cried M. Cendrillon, smiting himself on the chest.

Everybody seemed to be of the same opinion as Cendrillon, when the door opened, and François appeared again, a napkin under his arm, and shouted, with an air of self-content,—

"We are served, the company will come to the table, if you please."

"Decidedly François has had something this evening," said Frederic, presenting his arm to Madame Marmodin, at the very moment when M. Roquet also advanced to offer himself as a cavalier, but the young woman took Frederic's arm as she said,—

"Mercy, how very gallant you are to me today."

"Does that surprise you? Don't you know that for a long time I have been your slave? and has it not dawned upon you that I am constantly at your feet?"

"Truly, oh, that must be very fatiguing for you, I don't wish you to make yourself so uncomfortable."

"When shall I be able to see you," murmured M. Dernesty, offering his arm to Madame Mondigo, who answered very low, almost without moving her lips,—

"Hush, take care, somebody may hear you."

"Do you think these people suspect anything?"

"Didn't you see by the way in which I held my fingers that I am going out on Thursday at noon?"

"Yes, in fact, Thursday, that is a long way off, let us hope that they have placed me near you at the table."

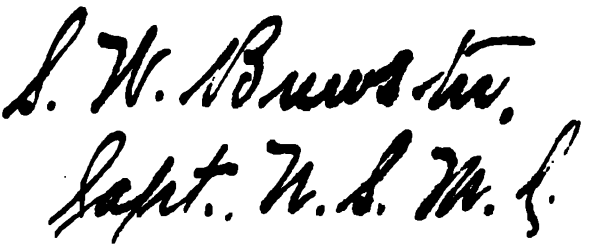
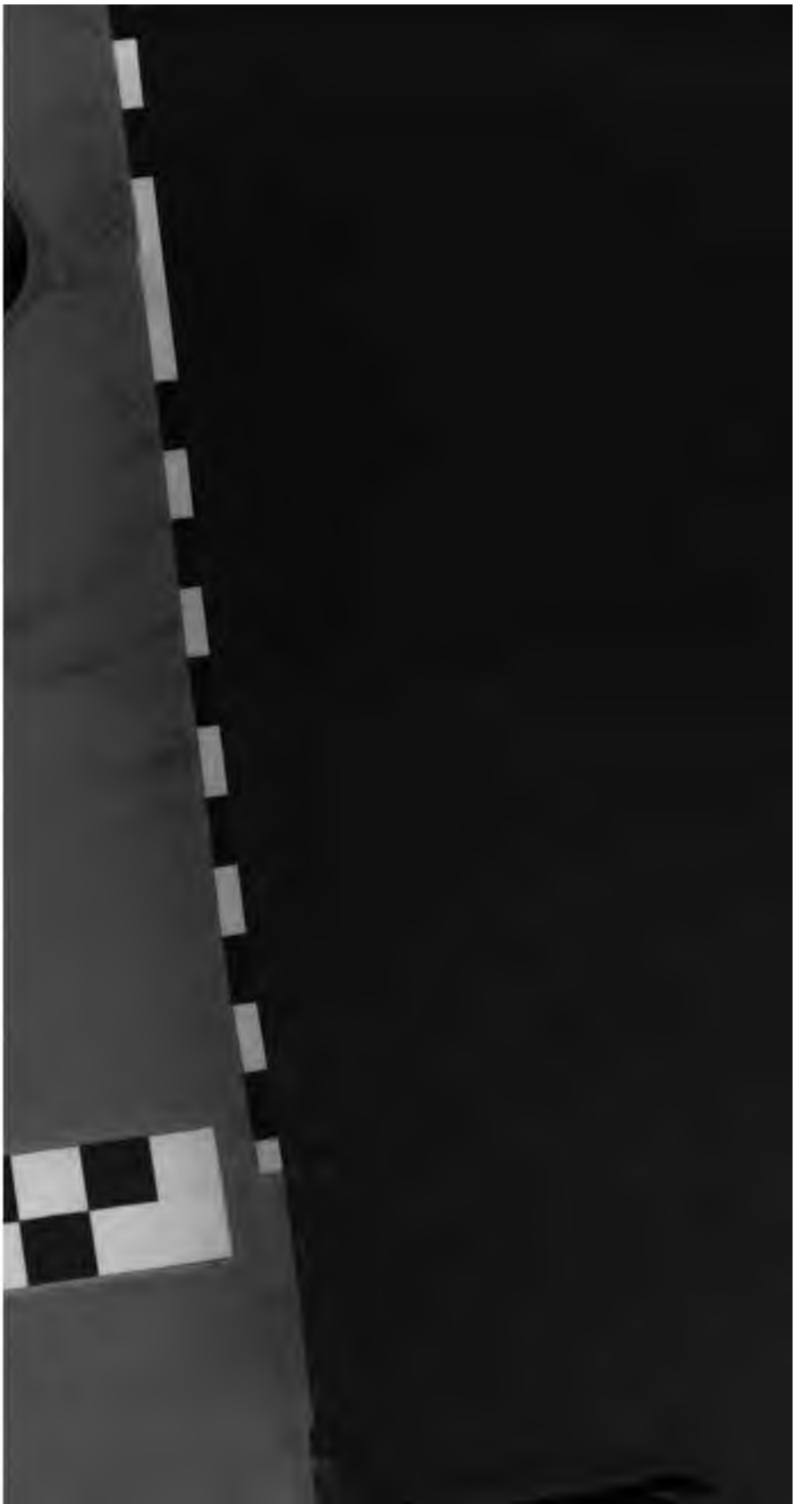
"Oh, there's no danger of that, my sister-in-law always monopolizes you."

"That'll be very interesting for me."

At this moment M. Roquet presented himself to offer his arm to the pretty blonde, but he saw M. Dernesty lead her away and looked to see if there was still another lady to be taken in; as he squinted he saw at the same time Madame Doguin and Mademoiselle Soufflat, but while he hesitated to decide to which of them he should give the preference both of them were led into the dining-room by other escorts. There only remained in the drawing-room Cousin Brouillard, who looked at everybody as they passed out making to himself his remarks and reflections on all that he saw, and on the words which he tried to seize as they passed.

"Well, the ladies have decidedly all escaped me," cried M. Roquet, looking at Cousin Brouillard, who answered him as he walked beside him to the dining-room,—

"I guarantee you that they won't escape every-

body. Come, let us go to the table, I'm dying of hunger, past seven o'clock, it's contemptible to have dinner so late. I believe that it's calculated, so that the appetites of the guests will be gone."

M. Roquet was about to answer, but his spectacles fell off, and while he was picking them up M. Brouillard passed into the dining-room.